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ABSTRACT

A research project investigated 2,313 persons who attended Del Mar College (Texas) during fall 1990 but did not enroll for spring 1991. Four sets of data were collected: (1) limited demographic information on the total student body; (2) demographic information drawn from school records to describe all nonreturnees; (3) demographic information describing 642 nonreturnees who were unreachable; and (4) demographic information plus telephone survey information from 399 nonreturnees. From a student body of 10,538, 2,313 were nonreturnees. Males and White non-Hispanics were overrepresented among nonreturnees. Within the whole group of nonreturnees, the numbers of female Hispanics and Whites and male Hispanics and Whites were about the same. Besides the 17 percent who withdrew from all classes, 23 percent of nonreturnees received all F grades; however, almost one-third maintained A or B averages. Almost 18 percent of the unreachables had transferred or graduated; almost 24 percent had relocated. A total of 113 persons should not have been on the nonreturnee list among the 1,041 studied; 304 were estimated to be dropouts; 82 indicated they were optouts; 303 indicated that they were stopouts; and 239 could not be classified. Reasons for not returning had to do with life circumstances in general and not with school in particular. Suggestions were made for further research and for action to be taken by Del Mar College. (Additional data and the questionnaire are appended.) (YLB)

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Dropouts, Stopouts, Optouts

at Del Mar College

Spring 1991

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Report of a Joint Research Project

Del Mar College
Corpus Christi, Texas

and

Adult and Extension Education Program
College of Education
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments		i
List of Tables		iii
Introduction		1
Definition of Terms		3
Part 1.	The Del Mar College Student Body	4
Part 2.	Students Who Did Not Return to Del Mar in Spring 1991	7
Part 3.	Nonreturnees Who Were Unreachable by Telephone	17
Part 4.	Nonreturnees Who Responded to the Telephone Survey	19
	Dropouts, Stopouts, and Optouts	19
	Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991	21
	Reasons Nonreturnees Attended Del Mar	27
	Feelings About Del Mar	30
	General Comments	35
Part 5.	Summary	36
Part 6.	Suggestions for Further Study and Action	45
Appendix A.	Nonreturnees by Major	50
Appendix B.	Comparison of All Nonreturnees With Those Interviewed and Unreachable	51
Appendix C.	Del Mar Unreachables	55
Appendix D.	Questionnaire	66

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Comparison of Student Body and Nonreturnees, Fall 1990.	5
2.	Gender and Ethnic Origin of Nonreturnees.	8
3.	Declared Majors With the Largest Numbers of Nonreturnees.	8
4.	Type of Major and Gender Among Nonreturnees.	9
5.	Type of Major and Ethnicity Among Nonreturnees.	10
6.	Hours Completed by Nonreturnees Before Fall 1990.	11
7.	Hours Attempted and Completed During Fall 1990 by Nonreturnees.	12
8.	Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Ethnicity.	13
9.	Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Gender.	14
10.	Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Type of Major.	15
11.	Reasons Nonreturnees Were Unreachable for Survey.	18
12.	Original Goal of Respondent.	20
13.	Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991.	22
14.	Events and Circumstances That Became Reasons for Not Returning.	24
15.	School-Related Reasons for Not Returning.	25
16.	Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991 by Gender.	25
17.	Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991 by Ethnicity.	27
18.	Reasons for Attending Del Mar.	28
19.	Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar.	31
20.	Percentages of Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar by Gender.	32

21. Percentages of Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar by Ethnicity. 34

22. Comments About Anything Else. 35

Appendix A. Nonreturnees by Major. 50

B.1. Gender Distribution of Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents. 52

B.2. Ethnic Distribution of Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents. 52

B.3. Hours of Academic Credit Received Before Spring 1991 by Population of Nonreturnees and by Samples of Unreachables and Respondents. 53

B.4. Type of Major by Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents. 54

C.1. Reasons Why Students Were Inaccessible for Survey. 56

C.2. Type of Ethnicity and Gender Among Unreachables. 58

C.3. Reasons for Not Contacting by Gender. 59

C.4. Reasons for Not Contacting by Ethnicity. 60

C.5. Hours Completed and Gender Among Unreachables. 62

C.6. Number of Hours Completed and Ethnicity Among Unreachables. 63

C.7. Reasons not Contacted and Under and Over 48 Hours Completed. 64

C.8. Number of Hours Completed and Major Area Among Unreachables. 65

INTRODUCTION

Retaining students is a concern for all institutions of higher education but especially for community colleges, which have open-admission policies and such a concentration of part-time students. Furthermore, community colleges with large proportions of ethnic-minority students have the added challenge of retaining these students, who are often characterized as more likely to drop out of school.

Within the state of Texas, a new voluntary plan is in effect to increase the presence of ethnic minorities in public institutions of higher education. In order to measure the effectiveness of various retention plans--yes, even to measure the size of the original problem--it is necessary to identify and count those students who drop out. Yet, the retention plan says little about measuring dropout.

One fact often overlooked in discussing the retention issue is that not everyone who fails to return to school should be considered a dropout. Some persons return after an absence of a semester or more; they can be called stopouts. Some intended to take only a few classes; they stopped attending because they accomplished their educational goal; they can be called optouts. The only persons who should be labeled dropouts are those who failed to accomplish their educational goal and have no definite plans to accomplish it later.

The only way to distinguish among stopouts, optouts, and dropouts is to ask individuals about their past and future intentions.

During 1990, Del Mar College (DMC) and the Adult and Extension Education Program, College of Education, Texas A&M University, laid out a plan to identify and count stopouts, optouts, and dropouts at Del Mar. One purpose of this plan was to provide DMC with baseline data on its nonreturnees (including dropouts). A second purpose was to test the feasibility of gathering such data by telephone. This report presents that information, along with relevant information already routinely gathered by DMC.

This study focused on persons who enrolled for at least six hours of credit at DMC during fall 1990 but who did not enroll for any hours during spring 1991 (and who did not graduate or transfer to another college). In order to do this study, researchers collected four sets of data.

Set 1 consisted of limited demographic information on the total student body, which is reviewed in Part 1 of the report.

Set 2 consisted of demographic information drawn from school records to describe all nonreturnees (a total of 2,313) who enrolled for at least four hours of credit during the fall. With

some exceptions, this can be considered the population for the study. Exceptions include eliminating those enrolled for only four or five hours and those who did not list a telephone number. Data on nonreturnees are reported in Part 2.

Set 3 consists of demographic information drawn from school records to describe 642 nonreturnees who were found to be unreachable through the telephone numbers listed for them in school records. It also includes the reasons they could not be reached (which in some cases also seemed to be the reasons they did not return). By comparing this sample with the population of nonreturnees, researchers can determine whether the survey may have systematically excluded or underrepresented certain portions of the population. They can also determine how many unreachables might have been dropouts. This information is reported in Part 3.

Set 4 consists of demographic information plus telephone survey information obtained from 399 nonreturnees. The questionnaire information should tell reasons people had for attending Del Mar and reasons they did not return. It should also produce a breakdown of nonreturnees into dropouts (those who did not plan to accomplish their original educational goal), stopouts (those who planned to accomplish the goal later), and optouts (those who did accomplish their goal, even though the goal was not the completion of a degree or program). By comparing this sample with the population of nonreturnees in terms of demographic variables, it is possible to judge whether the survey overrepresented or underrepresented certain portions of the population. This information is reported in Part 4.

When the four sets of data were compared in terms of demographics (see Appendix B), they seemed generally comparable. Thus, it appears safe to conclude that findings from the questionnaire and the study of unreachables can be generalized to the whole population of nonreturnees. Furthermore, it seems that a telephone-survey method is an acceptable way to gain information about Del Mar's nonreturnees.

Information in this report establishes that not more than 60% of Del Mar's nonreturnees should be considered dropouts and that the percentage may even be considerably lower. It shows that nonreturnees have overwhelmingly positive attitudes about Del Mar and about the education they have received there. It also offers evidence about why students do not remain in school on a continuous basis, even when they retain the intention to accomplish their educational goals.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Dropout. A person who left school without attaining an educational goal and does not plan to attain it in the future. In this case, the person was enrolled at Del Mar College during fall 1990 but not during spring 1991 and was interviewed during spring semester.

Nonreturnee. A person enrolled at Del Mar College for fall 1990 but not for spring 1991; the person did not graduate or transfer to another school. In this case, the only nonreturnees studied were those taking more than three hours during fall.

Optout. A person who left school after attaining the educational goal being pursued at the time. In this case, the person was enrolled at Del Mar College during fall 1990 but not during spring 1991, and was interviewed during spring semester.

Respondent. A nonreturnee who completed a telephone interview during spring 1991.

Stopout. A person who left school without attaining an educational goal but does plan to attain it in the future. In this case, the person was enrolled at Del Mar College during fall 1990 but not during spring 1991 and was interviewed during spring semester.

Unreachable. A nonreturnee whom interviewers were unable to contact for an interview during spring 1991. A variety of circumstances might have prevented the interview.

PART 1

THE DEL MAR COLLEGE STUDENT BODY

The information on nonreturnees can be most helpful when it is seen in the context of comparable information about the whole student body. Some of the most basic information is given here, as reported by Del Mar's Office of Institutional Research. (It should be noted that persons taking only one to three hours of credit were included in the student body but deliberately excluded from the nonreturnee figures, so that total nonreturnees are somewhat underestimated and nonreturnees with part-time status are especially underestimated.)

During fall 1990, there were 10,538 different persons enrolled in credit courses. (This is called the headcount.) Males made up 39.9% of the student body; females made up 60.1%. In terms of ethnicity, 46.5% were White, .3% were American Indian or Alaskan native, 3.0% were Black, 1.0% were Asian, 49.0% were Hispanic, .2% were nonresident alien. Thus, a total of 53% of students represented ethnic minorities.

The average number of hours carried by a student during fall semester was 8.6, as compared to a full load of 12 hours. This average is formed by having 34.7% full-time and 65.3% part-time students. Among the students were 19.5% who were attending college for the first time.

Table 1 compares the student body and the nonreturnees on the items identified above. Almost 22% of the fall student body did not return for spring. Presumably, a large portion of the nonreturnees were replaced during spring by other new or returning students.

Females predominated both in the student body and among nonreturnees; however, the percentage of males not returning was more than 4% greater than the percentage of males in the student body. The ethnic made-up of the nonreturnees almost exactly matched that of the student body. Whites were overrepresented among nonreturnees by about 1.5% , while Hispanic nonreturnees were underrepresented by almost the same percentage.

Figures for average hours carried for the student body and nonreturnees are not comparable, as already mentioned. Allowing for the unreported nonreturnees (taking 1-3 hours), it seems that the nonreturnee average of 8.9 hours would drop below the student body average of 8.6 hours. Thus, nonreturnees probably took fewer hours than average.

Full-time status versus part-time status also is affected by exclusion of those nonreturnees taking only one to three hours.

Table 1
Comparison of Student Body and Nonreturnees, Fall 1990.

Item	Student Body	Nonreturnees
Total	10,538*	2,313*
Gender		
Females	6,330 (60.1)**	1,295 (56.0)
Males	4,208 (39.9)	1,018 (44.0)
Ethnicity***		
White, non-Hispanic	4,899 (46.5)	1,111 (48.0)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	32 (0.3)	7 (0.3)
Black, non-Hispanic	312 (3.0)	70 (3.0)
Asian or Pacific Islander	110 (1.0)	26 (1.1)
Hispanic	5,164 (49.0)	1,096 (47.4)
Nonresident Alien	21 (0.2)	3 (0.1)
Average hours carried****	8.6	8.9
Status****		
Full-time	3,657 (34.7)	725 (32.3)
Part-time	6,881 (65.3)	1,588 (68.7)

*Percentages in this column are based on this total.
**Throughout this report, figures in parentheses in tables are percentages.
***In the rest of this report, some shortened ethnic labels are used in tables because of space limitations.
****Figures for student body and nonreturnees are not exactly comparable because the student body figure includes those taking 1-3 hours and the nonreturnee figure does not; the nonreturnee average hours and full-time status are overestimated.

Thus, one would expect the student body percentage of part-time students to be higher than that for nonreturnees, if the proportions were actually equal. In fact, it is lower (65.3% in the student body vs. 68.7% among nonreturnees, thus offering further evidence that part-time students are more likely not to return.

Within the nonreturnees, there were a higher percentage (23.0%) of first-time students than in the student body as a whole (19.5%).

In summary, while none of the differences between nonreturnees and the student body is glaring, it can be said that those at slightly greater risk of nonreturning are males, Whites, persons enrolled on a part-time basis, and those attending college for the first time.

PART 2

STUDENTS WHO DID NOT RETURN TO DEL MAR
IN SPRING 1991

According to school records, there were 2,313 students who enrolled at Del Mar College in fall 1990 who did not return the following semester, spring 1991 (and who were enrolled for at least four hours but neither graduated nor transferred to another college). (At least 113 and possibly twice that number were incorrectly placed on this list, but there was no way to identify the individuals and delete them from this analysis.) This section describes those nonreturnees in terms of gender, ethnicity, and major. Then it examines several pieces of information related to their involvement at Del Mar: hours completed before fall 1990, hours attempted and completed during fall, grade point average (GPA) for fall, and academic standing at the end of fall.

In relation to GPA, one point should be emphasized, even before the full description is given: It should not be assumed that low grades are a predominant cause of not returning. While planners might wish for no one to make failing grades, it is still noteworthy that only about 35% of nonreturnees got the equivalent of straight D's or worse. In fact, 7.6% made straight A's, and almost one-third maintained either an A or a B average. With one myth dispelled, the review can move on to a thorough evaluation of the whole set of variables.

Gender and ethnicity. Almost all nonreturnees were either White (48%) or Hispanic (47.4%) (see Table 2). Within each of these two ethnic groups, the breakdown by gender was about the same (almost 27% female and about 21% male, when percentages are stated in terms of the whole group of nonreturnees). Only among Asians were there more males (.8%) than females (.3%). In terms of ethnicity, there are so few in the non-White-non-Hispanic categories that it is difficult to expect the findings to be generalizable to comparable pools of nonreturnees in other semesters.

Major. Nonreturnees by major are reported in Appendix A. Table 3 highlights the majors with the largest numbers of nonreturnees. The meaning of these numbers, of course, is influenced by multiple factors, including the total number of persons declaring each major. The table includes all majors reporting more than 40 nonreturnees.

Further analysis has been done by grouping individual majors into Academic, Vocational, and Undeclared categories. When majors are grouped, there are approximately two academic- and two vocational-major nonreturnees for every undeclared major; this seems to indicate that lack of declaring a major does not make

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Table 2
Gender and Ethnic Origin of Nonreturnees.

Ethnic Origin	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
White, non-Hispanic	620 (26.8)	491 (21.2)	1111 (48.0)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4 (0.2)	3 (0.1)	7 (0.3)
Black, non-Hispanic	44 (1.9)	26 (1.1)	70 (3.0)
Asian	8 (0.3)	18 (0.8)	26 (1.1)
Hispanic	617 (26.7)	479 (20.7)	1096 (47.4)
Nonresident Alien	2 (0.1)	1 (0.0)	3 (0.1)
TOTAL	1295 (56.0)	1018 (44.0)	2313

Notes: Percentages (in parentheses) in the gender columns represent percentages within the whole population.

Table 3
Declared Majors With the Largest Numbers of Nonreturnees.

Major	Nonreturnees
Business Administration	211
Pre-education (Secondary)	120
Criminal Justice Tech.	105
Registered Nursing	99
Psychology	61
Legal Assisting	55
Accounting Assoc.	53
Pre-education (English)	48
Radiologic Technology	45
Liberal Arts	44
Computer Science	41

persons more sporadic in their attendance. Again, though, the meaning of these figures would be influenced by the total number of students in each of the three categories.

Table 4 combines these categories of majors with gender. The distribution of females and males within each type of major is about the same as in the nonreturnee population as a whole, indicating that there is not one type of major that is more associated with male or female nonreturning.

Type of major should also be considered in relation to ethnicity. (See Table 5.) Hispanics were more likely not to return to vocational majors, while Whites were more likely not to return if they had academic majors or had not declared majors. The meaning of these figures, of course, depends on the ethnic mix of the entire student body within each group of majors. (It is probably unwise to generalize about the other ethnic groups, because of the small numbers of subjects.)

Table 4
Type of Major and Gender Among Nonreturnees.

Type of Major	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Academic	518 (22.4)	392 (16.9)	910 (39.3)
Vocational	518 (22.4)	404 (17.5)	922 (39.9)
Undeclared	259 (11.2)	222 (9.6)	481 (20.8)
TOTAL	1295 (56.0)	1018 (44.0)	2313

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) in the gender columns are percentages of the total population.

Table 5
Type of Major and Ethnicity Among Nonreturnees.

Ethnic Origin	Type of Major: Academic	Vocational	Undeclared	Total
White, non-Hispanic	478 (20.7)	362 (15.7)	271 (11.7)	1111 (48.0)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	2 (0.1)	7 (0.3)
Black, non-Hispanic	24 (1.0)	36 (1.6)	10 (0.4)	70 (3.0)
Asian	14 (0.6)	9 (0.4)	3 (0.1)	26 (1.1)
Hispanic	391 (16.9)	511 (22.1)	194 (8.4)	1096 (47.4)
Nonresident Alien	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	3 (0.1)
TOTAL	910 (39.3)	922 (39.9)	481 (20.8)	2313

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of nonreturnees.

Academic history. Four measures of academic history are covered in the next sections: hours completed before fall 1990, hours attempted and completed during fall, grade point average for fall, and academic standing at the end of fall.

Hours completed previously. Among the spring nonreturnees, 532 (23%) had not completed any work at Del Mar before fall 1990 (see Table 6). While some persons might have enrolled in and dropped courses at earlier times, it seems likely that many had their first taste of college during the fall semester and chose not to return the next semester.

About 36% more (811) had only 1-24 hours of academic credit when they began the fall semester. The remaining number, almost 42%, chose not to continue attendance in the spring, even after considerable success in accumulating hours. It should also be noted that almost 14% had completed more hours than are generally considered necessary to complete a two-year program (60 hours). It might be wise to study separately the motives and needs of the 312 persons who had completed 61-279 hours.

Table 6
Hours Completed by Nonreturnees Before Fall 1990.

Hours	Persons Completing	Percentage of Total
0	532	23.0
1-12	436	18.9
13-24	375	17.2
25-36	273	11.8
37-48	194	8.4
49-60	191	8.2
61-72	93	4.0
73-84	66	2.9
85-96	42	1.8
97-279	111	4.8

Hours attempted and completed. Table 7 explores the participation during fall 1990 of those who did not return in spring 1991. Hours attempted are those for which students were registered on twelfth class day in the fall. Of the nonreturnees enrolling for at least 4 hours, almost 69% were taking fewer than 12 hours, a mark often used to determine full-time enrollment. Persons taking only 1-3 hours were not included in this study. If they had been, it would probably be even clearer that nonreturning students are largely part-time students. (It will also become evident from questionnaire information that many are part-time by another definition too: They do not attend every semester.)

Hours attempted obviously can be greater than hours completed. Of the students enrolled for at least 4 hours, 394 withdrew from all courses before the end of the fall semester; another 319 received grades for only 1-3 hours. Thus, 713 who were taking at least 4 hours at the beginning of the semester had reduced their participation within the semester so that it was less than that required initially for inclusion in the study.

Grade Point Average for fall 1990. Poor grades are often identified as causes of dropout. The nonreturnees were studied in terms of the grade point averages (GPA's) they made during fall semester.

Table 7
Hours Attempted and Completed During Fall 1990 by Nonreturnees.

Hours	Persons Attempting	Persons Completing
0	*	394 (17.0)
1-3	*	319 (13.8)
4-6	914 (39.5)	723 (31.2)
7-9	505 (21.8)	415 (17.9)
10-12	533 (23.1)	294 (12.7)
13-15	305 (13.2)	141 (6.1)
16-19	56 (2.4)	27 (1.2)

*Taking 0 hours would be a logical impossibility; those taking only 1-3 at the beginning of fall were not included in this study.

A total of 394 persons dropped all classes in the fall and then did not return for the spring semester. In terms of this analysis of grades, of course, there is no way to know whether anticipation of poor grades was a cause for dropping all classes.

A surprising 539, however, made all F's during fall semester. When they are added to persons who made 1.000 ("straight D's") or less, there were 812 (35.1%) persons with clearly problematic performance. GPA's between 1.001 and 2.000 numbered 350 (15.1%), and might have caused concern about being able to continue in school. It is possible that poor grades led many persons not to return for the next semester.

However, GPA's between 2.001 and 3.000 totaled 422 (18.2%), and those between 3.001 and 4.000 totaled 335 (14.5%). Almost one-third of the nonreturnees maintained an A or B average. In fact, 175 actually had straight A's.

Further analysis can be made of GPA by ethnicity, gender, and type of major. Table 8 analyzes grades on the basis of ethnicity. Aside from the small groups of American Indians, Asians, and nonresident aliens, these patterns can be seen among the ethnic groups: Blacks had the smallest portion of those who did not finish the semester but the largest group with grades below 1.01. Whites had the highest portion of those getting top grades (3.01-4.00) and Hispanics had the lowest. Whites, though, had the highest portion of those dropping all classes.

It is risky to speculate about the meaning of differences in rates. Some possible interpretations, however, are that Whites are more prone to drop classes in anticipation of failing, while Blacks are more prone to stick it out and get the bad grades. At the same time, even good grades do not insure that Whites will return the next semester, as shown by the large portion of White nonreturnees who had gotten good grades during the previous semester. As with other data, the meaning of these figures cannot be interpreted without knowing more about the grades of the entire student body.

Table 8
Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Ethnicity.

Ethnic Origin	Dropped All Classes	Grade Point Average .00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00
White, non-Hispanic (1111*)	200 (18.0)	301 (27.1)	153 (13.8)	220 (19.8)	237 (21.3)
American Indian or Alaskan Native (7*)	3 (42.9)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	0
Black, non-Hispanic (70*)	5 (7.1)	36 (51.4)	12 (17.1)	9 (12.9)	8 (11.4)
Asian (26*)	4 (15.4)	8 (30.8)	2 (7.7)	9 (34.6)	3 (11.5)
Hispanic (1096*)	182 (16.6)	464 (42.3)	182 (16.6)	183 (16.7)	85 (7.8)
Nonresident Alien (3)	0	1 (33.3)	0	0	2 (66.7)
TOTALS	394	812	350	422	335

*Number in parentheses in this column is total persons for the ethnic group and is the basis on which percentages (in parentheses in other columns) were determined for that group.

Table 9 explores the relationships between GPA and gender. A larger portion of male nonreturnees had failing grades in the previous semester, but a slightly larger portion of females had dropped all classes before the semester ended. More females had high grades (3.01-4.00).

Table 10 considers the relationship between GPA and types of major. Among the types, there was a considerable variation in percentage who dropped all courses during the previous semester; academic majors had the lowest portion and vocational majors the highest. About one-third of nonreturnees in each group of majors had made grades of 1.00 or less, with vocational majors having the highest percentage. Generally speaking, vocational majors had lower grades than either of the other two groups.

Academic standing. Closely related to grades is the issue of academic standing. At the end of the fall semester, 1,669 persons in good academic standing decided not to return to Del Mar for the spring semester. Probation would have been the fate of 517 if they had returned, including 34.6% of Black males, 31.8% of Black females, 29.3% of Hispanic females, 27.8% of Hispanic males, 18.9% of White males, and 17.6% of White females.

Only 127 (5.5%) of the nonreturnees were placed on academic suspension and were not permitted to return for the spring semester. Those on suspension included 48 Whites (18 females and 30 males) and 73 Hispanics (37 females and 36 males). In terms of percentages, Hispanic males had the highest rate of suspension (7.5%). With only three Black females on suspension, the rate was 6.8%. White males (6.1%) and Hispanic females (6.0%) rounded out the highest percentages.

Table 9
Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Gender.

Gender	Dropped All Classes	Grade Point Average .00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00
Females (1295*)	232 (17.9)	413 (31.9)	202 (15.6)	237 (18.3)	211 (16.3)
Males (1018*)	162 (15.9)	399 (39.2)	148 (14.5)	185 (18.2)	124 (12.2)
TOTALS	394	812	350	422	335

*Number in parentheses in this column is total for this gender and is the basis on which percentages (in parentheses in other columns) were determined for that group.

Table 10
Grade Point Average of Nonreturnees by Type of Major.

Type of Major	Dropped All Classes	Grade Point Average .00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00
Academic (910*)	123 (13.5)	308 (33.8)	145 (15.9)	197 (21.6)	137 (15.1)
Vocational (922*)	188 (20.4)	346 (37.5)	123 (13.3)	148 (16.1)	117 (12.7)
Undeclared (481*)	83 (17.3)	158 (32.8)	82 (17.0)	77 (16.0)	81 (16.8)

*Number in parentheses in first column is total for this type of major and is the basis on which percentages (in parentheses in other columns) were determined for that group.

When probation and suspension are taken together, noticeable academic difficulty was experienced during the fall by more than 35% of Hispanics and more than 38% of Blacks who did not return the next semester. These findings cast some doubt on the questionnaire findings (discussed later), which indicated that large portions of the nonreturnees had had positive experiences and planned to return to Del Mar at a later date.

Summary. There were 2,313 students who--according to school records--did not return to Del Mar in spring 1991; 56% were female, 44% male. Whites (48%), Hispanics (47.4%), and Blacks (3%) were the largest ethnic groups. Eleven majors lost more than 40 students each, and academic and vocational types of majors each had twice as many nonreturnees as did the undeclared majors. Hispanics were more likely not to be returning if they had a vocational major; however, Whites were more likely not to return if they had academic or undeclared majors.

In terms of academic history, consideration was given to hours completed before fall 1991, hours attempted and completed during fall, GPA for fall, and academic standing at the end of fall. Here are some highlights of that study. Almost one-fourth of nonreturnees had been new students in the fall, with no previous hours of credit. At the other extreme, almost 14% had completed more than 60 hours, with the maximum being 279 hours.

In terms of what they tried to accomplish during the fall semester, almost 69% were taking fewer than 12 hours, which is considered a full load. In terms of what they did accomplish,

about 80% earned 9 hours or less; 17% earned no hours at all, having dropped all classes.

Another 35% had grade point averages of 1.00 or less in courses they did complete. On the other hand, 175 nonreturnees had straight A's (4.00), and almost one-third of the nonreturnees had A or B averages. Blacks had the smallest portion of those who did not finish the semester but the largest group with grades of 1.00 or less. For top grades (3.01-4.00), Whites had the highest portion and Hispanics had the lowest. Whites, however, had the highest portion of those dropping all classes. Males were more likely to have failing grades, but females were more likely to have dropped all classes. Vocational majors were generally more likely to make lower grades than academic majors or undeclared majors.

Academic probation would have been the fate of 22% if they had returned. Blacks, both males and females, had the greatest likelihood of being on probation. Another 5.5% of nonreturnees had been suspended, not allowed to return in the spring. Hispanic males had the highest rate of suspension. When probation and suspension are taken together, academic difficulty was experienced by more than 38% of nonreturning Blacks and 35% of nonreturning Hispanics.

The real meaning of some of these statistics can only be determined by placing them alongside comparable figures for the entire student body. For instance, there may have been more Hispanics on suspension chiefly because there are more Hispanics in the student body. Part-time attendance may predominate among nonreturnees because it predominates in the student body as a whole. If the variables measured here were found to exist in the same proportions in the whole student body, none of the descriptions could be said to distinguish nonreturnees from returnees.

Furthermore, this analysis is only the first step in this study. People have only been classed as nonreturnees (in relation to a specific semester). Whether they are dropouts, opt-outs, or stopouts cannot be determined from college records. Those distinctions can only be made by interviewing individuals about their past and future goals, as was done in the telephone survey to be discussed next.

PART 3

NONRETURNEES WHO WERE UNREACHABLE BY TELEPHONE

All nonreturning students were randomly ordered for contacting and interviewing. As interviewers determined a person was unreachable, that person was put into the unreachable category. When interviewers had completed the required number of interviews, the 642 unreachables were tallied and studied. No further study was done of the remaining 1,272 nonreturnees. This section describes the characteristics of the unreachables, the chief reason being to assure that no group was systematically excluded from the survey. (Additional details about unreachables are given in Appendix C.)

Table 11 lists the reasons people were unreachable. A total of 113 (17.6%) persons should not have been on the list because each had some characteristic that should have eliminated him or her from the study of nonreturnees.

Another 345 (53.8%) were unreachable because of some problem related to the telephone. This included persons who were called three times without getting any response at that number.

When someone answered the phone and knew the person, it was determined that another 153 (23.8%) had relocated. It is not certain that those persons had moved beyond the reach of Del Mar, but that assumption is made for those who had "moved" or "moved away." That allows for a worst-case scenario in terms of dropping out. The wording of "moved" or "moved away" was retained exactly as recorded on the survey forms, with the idea that "moved away" may be a more certain indication that the person moved beyond the reach of the college.

Another 31 (4.8%) were classified as miscellaneous, with 18 of those being persons who refused to answer the survey. Because persons on academic suspension were included in the nonreturnees list, it can be speculated that at least some of those who refused to answer were in that category.

A few highlights from the Appendix C findings are noted here for perspective. The male-female distribution among unreachables was almost exactly the same as that for the nonreturning group from which they were drawn. Hispanics and Blacks were only slightly overrepresented among unreachables; Hispanics represented 51.9% of unreachables versus 47.4% of total nonreturnees; Blacks represented 3.9% of unreachables versus 3.0% of total nonreturnees. Hispanics were somewhat overrepresented among those whose phones had been disconnected (14.4% of total unreachables), whereas Whites were overrepresented among those who had transferred without the school's knowledge (7.4%).

In summary, this study required contacting five persons in order to reach two who would and could complete the survey. Among the unreachables, half could not be reached because of telephone-related problems and one-fourth had relocated. While telephone survey has its problems, it seems a viable method for gaining data on nonreturnees.

Table 11
Reasons Nonreturnees Were Unreachable for Survey.

Category / Reason	Frequency		Frequency	
Should not have been on list			113	(17.6)
Transferred to another school.	92	(14.3)		
Currently enrolled.	14	(2.2)		
Graduated.	4	(0.6)		
Did not attend in fall.	2	(0.3)		
Deceased.	1	(0.2)		
Unreachable by telephone			345	(53.8)
Telephone disconnected.	166	(25.9)		
Tried three times.	91	(14.2)		
Wrong number.	88	(13.7)		
Relocation			153	(23.8)
Moved.	89	(13.9)		
Moved away.	38	(5.9)		
Military service.	26	(4.0)		
Miscellaneous			31	(4.8)
Refused to answer survey.	18	(2.8)		
Miscellaneous.	13	(2.0)		

PART 4

NONRETURNEES WHO RESPONDED TO THE TELEPHONE SURVEY

Student interviewers reached 399 nonreturnees who were willing to complete the telephone questionnaire. This section of the report deals with those responses. It includes discussions on classifying dropouts, stopouts, and optouts; respondents' reasons for not returning for spring semester; their original reasons for attending; their feelings about Del Mar; and their general comments.

Dropouts, Stopouts, and Optouts

Not every person who fails to return to college should be classified as a dropout. Different people have different purposes or goals in attending college. A question asked near the beginning of the interview had to do with the respondent's goal when he/she first enrolled. Table 12 gives these responses.

A chief purpose of this study was to distinguish among dropouts, stopouts, and optouts (a term coined for this study and meaning the same thing as another frequently used term, invisible achievers). Several items on the questionnaire (5, 5a, first option of 8) combined to classify nonreturnees into these three groups.

Dropouts are people who did not accomplish their educational goal and do not plan to accomplish it later.

Stopouts did not accomplish their goal but do plan to accomplish it later.

Optouts did accomplish their original goal; it is possible, of course, that they will return to accomplish other goals.

Only 11 persons clearly identified themselves as dropouts. They represent less than 3% of those who responded to the questionnaire.

Seventeen persons were clearly optouts; 65 others probably were optouts, although there was some conflict in their answers. Those 65 said they had accomplished their goal, but they did not identify that accomplishment as a reason for not returning in the spring. If all 82 are considered optouts, they represent about 21% of respondents.

Almost all of the remaining respondents (303 or 73%) classified themselves as stopouts. (A few failed to answer one of the key questions, so could not be classified.) One other question (5c) helps to test the resolve to return; 217 stopouts listed a

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Table 12
Original Goal of Respondent.

4. When you first enrolled, which of these things did you want to accomplish? (Choose only one.)

Option	Response
Take one course or only a few courses.	74 (18.5)
Take as many courses as seemed interesting.	17 (4.3)
Complete courses needed to transfer to another school.	90 (22.6)
Complete a degree or certificate or some other kind of program of study.	210 (52.6)
Other.	8 (2.0)

definite time for returning to school. Even if all of the 86 unspecific stopouts were not serious about returning--and should be classified as dropouts--54% of those interviewed clearly envision themselves returning to school. Furthermore, 238 stopouts believe Del Mar is the place where they will continue their education.

About 21% of nonreturnees did what they had come to do; presumably, their experience at Del Mar was positive. Between 54% and 73% expressed a typical pattern for community college attendance--stopping out from time to time but intending to complete their original goal. Even if all the other respondents are called dropouts, that would be not more than 25% and as little as 3%.

A second stage in figuring the dropout-stopout-optout mix involves evaluating the reasons other people were unreachable for the interviews. At least as many as 293 (45.6%) of the Unreachables might be dropouts because of the reasons they were unreachable. Their phones had been disconnected, or someone who answered at that phone number said they had "moved" or "moved away." Other groupings (e.g., "wrong number," or "refused to answer survey") might include dropouts, but this is less certain. In any case, an estimate of 304 (29.2%) persons out of the total of 1,041 Unreachables and Respondents is a more likely figure for the number of dropouts. This leaves the original 82 (7.9% of the total of 1,041) clearly classified as optouts, because they can only be classified thus if they answer the questionnaire. By the

same token, the 303 (29.1% of 1,041) who identified themselves as stopouts remain in that category. This leaves 352 (33.8%) persons out of the 1,041 who cannot be classified.

A caveat should be offered here. It might have been more comfortable to answer yes to the question, "Do you still plan to accomplish that goal?" Social acceptability could contribute to the high number identifying themselves as stopouts instead of dropouts. On the other hand, the large number giving a definite return time indicates that stopout should be a large category. Also, the number of positive comments to open-end items elsewhere in the questionnaire indicates an extremely positive attitude toward education at Del Mar.

In summary, there is considerable leeway for interpreting the appropriate classification for some of the unreachables. Even so, it is clear that almost 30% of those who might have been classified as dropouts are really stopouts and that an additional 8% are optouts, having accomplished their immediate educational goals. This leaves, at maximum only slightly more than 60% of nonreturnees as dropouts. The dropout-optout-stopout mix at Del Mar should be seen as encouraging.

Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991

To a great extent, this section is the heart of this study. It was reasoned that, if community college faculty and staff could determine why people drop out, something could be done to help them stay in school. Even though this study turned out to be primarily about stopouts, the concern remains. If people could be helped to accomplish their educational goals without interruption, it seems, they could get on with other parts of their lives. Furthermore, helping people stay in school would prevent their turning from intended stopouts to actual dropouts.

Table 13 presents an overview of reasons people gave for not returning to Del Mar for spring 1991. Six major categories were used in the questionnaire; four categories offered a chance for peple to comment on the specific reasons; and two of those four categories also offered options from which people could choose in order to identify specific reasons. For the two categories (money and time) with subcategories listed, the respondent was first asked to give a voluntary answer and then was read the list of choices. If the respondent's voluntary answer fit a listed subcategory, the interviewer checked the appropriate subcategory. Analysts later went over the data to determine additional categories that could be formed by grouping voluntary responses. In addition to responding about the six categories of reasons, respondents were asked to identify the one category that was the biggest reason for their not returning. In the various tables, those who identified a reason as the biggest are also counted within the total who identified it as a reason.

Table 13
Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991.*

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

Category / Subcategory		Was a Reason	Was Biggest Reason**
I accomplished my learning goals.		30 (7.5)	4
Lack of money.		170 (42.6)	104
Child care.	25		
Care of someone other than a child.	19		
Tuition.	120		
Transportation costs.	56		
Rent.	45		
Books or school supplies or tools.	110		
Medical expenses.	39		
Financial aid***	31		
General***	21		
Family***	10		
Unusual expenses***	6		
Lack of time.		172 (43.1)	72
Home responsibilities.	101		
Too much homework.	42		
Work related.****	111		
Didn't use my time well.	69		
Child responsibilities.***	10		
Other.***	114		
Other events or circumstances in my life.		264 (66.2)	150
I was unhappy with what I got in the classes.		59 (14.8)	14
I was unhappy with something else about the school.		60 (15.0)	7

*Percentages in parentheses; multiple responses cause totals of more than 100%.
**Count for "biggest reason" is also shown in "was a reason."
***Item not on questionnaire, formed from voluntary responses.
****Wording changed because of voluntary responses.

Of the 399 respondents, 30 said they did not return because they accomplished their goal. Since 82 persons had previously said they completed their educational goal, it is unclear why only 30 persons gave this as a reason for not returning. This subject will be explored later in this section.

Money was a reason for not returning, according to 42.6% of respondents, while time was a cause for 43.1%. Other events or circumstances in respondents' lives accounted for the greatest number of reasons; almost two of every three respondents listed a reason in this catch-all category. Being unhappy with school itself (14.8% with classes and 15.0% with something else) also caused people not to return.

Within the money category, major problems involved tuition (120 persons) and books (110). Within the time category, major problems involved work-related problems (111) and home responsibilities (101). Thus, it seems that money problems more often related directly to school while time problems more often related to the rest of life.

Table 14 presents a grouping of the voluntary comments given in response to the option, "Other events or circumstances in my life." Fifty persons mentioned job or work pressures, such as long work hours or more responsibility due to promotion. Although personal and home related matters received 30 mentions, no clear categorizing was possible among the 30. Surgery, illness, injury, and/or disability were grouped as a category, and received a total of 18 mentions, with no clear standout among them. The following items received six mentions each: death in family, family illness, accident or surgery, job schedule change, relative in military. It should be noted that, during this period, military units were sent abroad to the Persian Gulf and reserve units were put on active status. In addition to these persons who had family members affected, it was previously noted that a number of students did not return for spring semester because they were on active duty.

Items mentioned two to five times included: money, extra work, changed major or field, promotion at job or full-time job, separation or divorce, burnout, planning to transfer, religion, TASP-related problems. Items with one mention each included: JTPA, spouse in Del Mar too, single parenthood.

An overview of survey comments indicates that work-related problems probably played a major role in student inability to stay in school. Under both the "lack of time" section, with 111 mentions, and "events and circumstances," with 50 mentions, the respondents wanted interviewers to know that job and work issues or pressures were obstacles to retention.

Childcare problems were mentioned as problems under the three categories of "lack of money," "lack of time," and "events and circumstances." Although there were only 50 total mentions

Table 14
Events and Circumstances That Became Reasons for Not Returning.

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

Other events or circumstances in my life.

Subcategory	Responses
Job/work	50
Personal and home	30
Illness, injury, disability	18
Kids or baby	15
Pregnancy	14
Marriage, new marriage	14
Unemployment	9
Change in work hours	6
Relative in military	6
Death in family	6
Changed major, field	5

of childcare problems, the problem appears to be pervasive. Pregnancy received 14 mentions under "events and circumstances." Care of someone other than a child caused 19 students to make comments under "lack of money."

Table 15 identifies categories which the analyst formed for the comments that were made in response to the item, "I was unhappy with something else about the school." This item followed one that said, "I was unhappy with what I got in the classes." These two items were the only ones that dealt with school-related reasons for not returning.

Under this category, only instructors and parking received 10 or more mentions. Under the "unhappy with instructors" item, with 18 mentions, comments were miscellaneous, with no apparent groupings. Under the parking item, the 10 comments simply made negative comments about the Del Mar parking situation. One item dealing with class scheduling and inability to get needed classes received six mentions. Several items had two mentions each: admissions and enrollment; registration cost and disorganization; problems with financial aid or grant. Other items received one mention each: problems with counselors, lack of DMC social life, difficulty getting accepted into nursing program, unhappy with courses, staff and faculty, not enough help with dysgraphia; TASP requirements, need for daycare, bad advising, class over my head, difficulty balancing class and work, and money problems.

Table 16 presents the reasons for not returning, analyzed separately for males and females. The order of variables based

Table 15
School-Related Reasons for Not Returning.

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

I was unhappy with something else [other than classes] about the school.

Subcategories	Responses
Instructors	18
Parking	10
Class scheduling or availability	6
Admissions, enrollment	2
Registration cost, organization	2
Financial aid problems	2

Table 16
Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991 by Gender.*

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

Categories Subcategories	Male A Reason	Male Biggest Reason	Female A Reason	Female Biggest Reason
I accomplished my learning goals.	14 (9.3)	1	16 (6.5)	3
Lack of money.	69 (45.7)	38	101 (40.7)	66
Lack of time.	68 (45.0)	30	104 (41.9)	42
Other events or circumstances in my life.	97 (64.2)	52	167 (67.3)	98
I was unhappy with what I got in the classes.	18 (11.9)	5	41 (16.5)	9
I was unhappy with something else about the school.	31 (20.5)	4	29 (11.7)	3

*Percentages (in parentheses) are based on 151 males, 248 females.

on number of responses is roughly the same for males and females, with the various personal reasons far outnumbering the reasons related directly to school. Money and time were bigger problems for males, while other circumstances of life were a bigger problem for females. Females had more problems with classes, while males had more problems with other aspects of school.

When the reasons for not returning were studied in terms of the ethnicity of the respondents, the one Asian said that money was his or her greatest problem, and the one American Indian said that a reason other than those listed on the questionnaire was his or her greatest problem. Table 17 shows the responses for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics.

Eighteen Hispanics indicated that they left school because they had accomplished their goals, as compared to 11 White respondents and one Black respondent. In regard to leaving school because of lack of money, Blacks and Hispanics surveyed had similar responses of 45.5% and 46.4% respectively, while 37% of Whites gave lack of money as a reason for leaving. Percentages in all three groups were similar in regard to lack of time as a reason for leaving school, with Blacks higher at 45.5%, Whites at 44% and Hispanics at 42.7%. With regard to other events and circumstances influencing respondents to leave school, Blacks were higher at 81.8%, followed by Whites at 70.9% and Hispanics at 61.6%.

In the item on respondents being unhappy with what they got in classes, Blacks were again highest at 18.2%, followed by Whites at 14.9% and Hispanics at 14.7%. The last item asked respondents if unhappiness with something else about school caused them to leave school. Blacks once more had the highest percentage (18.2), closely followed by Whites at 16.6% and Hispanics at 13.7%.

When Whites and Hispanics are compared (leaving out Blacks because of the small numbers), the responses indicate that Hispanics had the greatest responses in having accomplished their goals, and in lack of money and time. Whites had the greatest percentage of responses in the category of other events and circumstances and in being unhappy with things other than classes. The two groups were approximately alike in response to being unhappy with classes.

The category of other events and circumstances can be considered a catchall and had the greatest number of responses for all groups. Excluding that category, Whites most frequently listed time as the problem, Hispanics listed lack of money, and Blacks gave time and money equal weight.

Table 17
Reasons for Not Returning Spring 1991 by Ethnicity.*

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

Categories	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
I accomplished my learning goals.	11 (6.3)	1 (9.0)	18 (8.5)
Lack of money.	66 (37.7)	5 (45.5)	98 (46.4)
Lack of time.	77 (44.0)	5 (45.5)	90 (42.7)
Other events or circumstances in my life.	124 (70.9)	9 (81.8)	130 (61.6)
I was unhappy with what I got in the classes.	26 (14.9)	2 (18.2)	31 (14.7)
I was unhappy with something else about the school.	29 (16.6)	2 (18.2)	29 (13.7)

*Percentages (in parentheses) are based on 175 Whites, 11 Blacks, 211 Hispanics.

Reasons Nonreturnees Attended Del Mar

One item on the questionnaire identified reasons people give for attending Del Mar and asked respondents to indicate each of the reasons that was true for them when they enrolled for the fall 1990 semester. Responses are summarized in Table 18; they are arranged in order of descending preference for the total group, not in the order on the questionnaire. (It is good to be reminded at this point that there is no way to know from existing data whether these nonreturnees are different from those who stayed in school, and there is no implication that their reasons for not returning have anything to do with their reasons for attending.)

In terms of overall responses, the top reasons for attending Del Mar were personal improvement (90.2%), being with interesting people (67.2%), getting skills in order to get a job (62.4), and taking courses to transfer to another school (53.4%). Not only

Table 18
Reasons for Attending Del Mar.

6. I'm going to read some statements to you. They are reasons people give for attending Del Mar. Please answer yes or no about each reason, as it applied to you when you enrolled last semester.

		Gender		Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	White	Hispanic
TOTAL SUBJECTS	399*	151*	248*	175*	211*
For my personal improvement.	360 (90.2)	141 (93.4)	219 (88.3)	155 (88.6)	194 (91.9)
Be with interesting people.	268 (67.2)	100 (66.2)	168 (67.7)	101 (57.7)	157 (74.4)
Get job skills so I can get a job.	249 (62.4)	84 (55.6)	165 (66.5)	91 (52.0)	150 (71.1)
Take courses to transfer to another school.	213 (53.4)	88 (58.3)	125 (50.4)	102 (58.3)	101 (47.9)
Get a license or other credential needed for my work.	187 (46.9)	69 (45.7)	118 (47.6)	76 (43.4)	102 (48.3)
Have something to do.	185 (46.4)	73 (48.3)	112 (45.2)	69 (39.4)	109 (51.7)
Get more job skills so I can get a raise or promotion.	170 (42.6)	60 (39.7)	110 (44.4)	58 (33.1)	106 (50.2)
Learn about a subject I will use in my leisure time.	163 (40.9)	68 (45.0)	95 (38.3)	51 (29.1)	107 (50.7)
Learn something new just for fun.	158 (39.6)	57 (37.7)	101 (40.7)	60 (34.3)	92 (43.6)
Learn to speak or write English.	144 (36.1)	61 (40.4)	83 (33.5)	43 (24.6)	95 (45.0)
Take remedial courses so I can go to another school.	77 (19.3)	34 (22.5)	43 (17.3)	30 (17.1)	43 (20.4)

*Percentages (in parentheses) in each column are based on this N.

does the desire for personal improvement far outstrip other reasons, it is one that may be ovelooked by community college planners who believe students attend chiefly for job preparation. In fact, just the idea of being with interesting people is a stronger reason than preparing for a job.

When responses are considered by gender, similar patterns emerge. Personal improvement still tops the list, and even more strongly for males (93.4%) than for females (88.3%). Being with interesting people is still second (66.2% for males and 67.7% for females). A very close third place for females is getting job skills (66.5%), while the same reason is fourth for males (55.6%). In third place for males is earning transfer credit (58.3%), which is a distant fourth for females (50.4%). These figures indicate that among Del Mar students--at least those who did not return in spring 1991--females are more likely than males to seek job skills, while males are more likely to seek transfer credit.

Table 18 includes data on the two largest ethnic groups. It may be more helpful, in terms of the less-populous groups, to report these findings as a whole. The one American Indian (or Alaskan Eskimo) and the one Asian agreed in listing the need to seek a license or credential and to get transfer credit; they also wanted contact with interesting people and personal improvement. The American Indian also wanted something to do; the Asian needed remedial work and help with English, and was also studying to prepare for a leisure-time activity.

The reasons given by the 11 Blacks are: seeking personal enrichment (9), getting job skills (8), earning transfer credit (8), being with interesting people (8), getting a license or other credential (7), improving job skills in order to get a raise (6), having something to do (6), learning for fun (6), learning to speak or write English (5), learning for leisure use (4), and getting remedial help (3). Eight of the total 11 items received a positive response greater than 50%.

Among the two most-populous ethnic groups, both Whites (88.6%) and Hispanics (91.9%) cared most strongly about personal improvement. Earning transfer credit was the very distant second priority of Whites (58.3%), followed closely by being with interesting people (57.7%) and followed more distantly by the desire to get job skills (52%). Hispanics tended to give higher ratings and to give high ratings to more items: being with interesting people (74.4%), gaining job skills (71.1%), having something to do (51.7%), learning for leisure use (50.7%), and increasing job skills to get a raise (50.2%).

Hispanic nonreturnees, thus, exceed Whites in their feelings that the community college serves a wide variety of purposes, both social and goal-oriented. They join Blacks, who have even more positive feelings about the multiple benefits of attending Del Mar.

One question, however, is how these reactions compare to those of students who did return in spring 1991. Is it possible that staying in school (not stopping out from time to time) produces or is produced by different ideas about what the student will get from the college context? Answers can be determined only by asking the same questions of those who attend semester after semester without a break.

Feelings About Del Mar

One question asked respondents whether they felt positive, negative, or undecided about different aspects of their attendance at Del Mar. As previously mentioned, these data can only be seen as true for the nonreturnees; there is no way to know whether they feel differently than do continuously enrolled students or whether their feelings were in any way a cause for not returning. The emphasis here, too, is on how nonreturnees felt, not on an objective measure of reality. For instance, one student might feel negative about making a grade of B among his A's, while another might be pleased with straight C's.

Table 19 shows responses of all who answered the questionnaire. Most nonreturnees felt positive about their grades (69.2%), how much they had learned (82.7%), what they learned that would help in their job or elsewhere (59.6%), their enjoyment of class (83.6%), and how well they got to know teachers (70.2%). In other words, feelings were predominantly positive.

The only item about which there was less than 50% positive feeling concerned things that happened at school but not in class (47.6% positive). The undecided responses (31.1%) might indicate that the question was too vague to stimulate thought or that respondents had not distinguished between class and non-class events in previous thinking. The percentage of negative responses (21.3%), however, indicates this issue may be worth exploring in later research, to determine what the negative feelings were about.

It is encouraging to note that the fewest negative and fewest undecided responses were toward how much students had learned and toward their enjoyment of class. More, however, were negative or undecided about the usefulness of what they had learned. It is also instructional to note that the items that received the highest numbers of negative votes also received the highest numbers of undecided votes. The question must be asked, Were the undecided votes a polite way to express a non-positive feeling?

Table 20 presents responses about feelings by gender. Because of the amount of information in the table, only percentages of responses are shown. The key questions are whether males and females differ on certain items and on their overall positive and negative feelings.

Table 19
Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar.

7. There are many ways that people describe their feelings about Del Mar. I'll read some of these. For each one, please tell me whether you felt positive or negative--or undecided.

Items	Negative	Positive	Undecided
My grades.	44 (11.0)	276 (69.2)	79 (19.8)
How much I learned.	26 (6.5)	330 (82.7)	42 (10.5)
What I learned that helped on my job or elsewhere.	74 (18.5)	238 (59.6)	87 (21.8)
My enjoyment of the class.	25 (6.3)	332 (83.2)	42 (10.5)
Things that happened at school but not in class.	85 (21.3)	190 (47.6)	124 (31.1)
How well I got to know the teachers.	62 (15.5)	280 (70.2)	57 (14.3)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages of row totals.

In terms of responses to individual items, females were more positive than males about grades (72.6% vs. 63.6%) and how much they had learned (85.5% vs. 78.1%). Males were more positive than females about things that happened outside of class (56.3% vs. 42.3%); it was the females' responses to this item which contributed most to its' being the only item with an overall rating that was not predominantly positive.

Males were more undecided about grades (27.2% vs. 15.3%), how much they had learned (15.2% vs. 7.7%, and the usefulness of what they learned (23.2% vs. 21%). Females were more undecided about enjoyment of class (11.3% vs. 9.3%) and things that happened outside of class (32.7% vs. 28.5%).

Females were more negative about grades (12.1% vs. 9.3%), the usefulness of what they learned (20.2% vs. 15.9%), and things that happened outside of class (25% vs. 15.2%).

Overall, males and females were equally positive in their responses, but females were also more negative and less undecided. Another way to group items, however, is to associate the first three as task-related and the last three as related to relationships. When this is done, it is clear that females are more positive than males about the task-related items (72.3% vs.

Table 20
Percentages of Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar by Gender.

7. There are many ways that people describe their feelings about Del Mar. I'll read some of these. For each one, please tell me whether you felt positive or negative--or undecided.

Items	Male	Female
My grades.		
Negative	9.3	12.1
Positive	63.6	72.6
Undecided	27.2	15.3
How much I learned.		
Negative	6.6	6.5
Positive	78.1	85.5
Undecided	15.2	7.7
What I learned that helped on my job or elsewhere.		
Negative	15.9	20.2
Positive	60.9	58.9
Undecided	23.2	21.0
My enjoyment of the class.		
Negative	7.3	5.6
Positive	83.4	83.1
Undecided	9.3	11.3
Things that happened at school but not in class.		
Negative	15.2	25.0
Positive	56.3	42.3
Undecided	28.5	32.7
How well I got to know the teachers.		
Negative	14.6	16.1
Positive	70.2	70.2
Undecided	15.2	13.7
Average of all items		
Negative	11.9	14.2
Positive	68.8	68.8
Undecided	19.8	17.0
Average of task-related items		
Negative	10.6	12.9
Positive	67.5	72.3
Undecided	21.9	14.7
Average of non-task-related items		
Negative	12.4	15.6
Positive	70.0	65.2
Undecided	17.7	19.2

67.5%), while males are more positive than females about relationships in the college setting (70% vs. 65.2%).

Females are more negative than males about both groupings (12.9% vs. 10.6% for task-related and 15.6% vs. 12.4% for relationship-related). Males are more undecided about task-related items (21.9% vs. 14.7%), and females are slightly more undecided about relationship-related items (19.2% vs. 17.7%).

In summary, it seems that females are more satisfied than males with task-related experiences but have less of a sense that their social needs are being met. Males are more undecided about their feelings, especially in terms of task-related items. The most-positive feelings for females were related to how much they had learned; the most-positive feelings for males were related to enjoying classes. For each group, the least-positive feelings were about things that happened outside of class; this was also an item about which there was considerable ambivalence. Ultimately, however, there was a predominance of positive response about all of the other items.

Feelings about Del Mar were also analyzed for ethnic differences. The one American Indian (or Alaskan Eskimo) and the one Asian responded positively to all questions. Responses of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics are shown in Table 21. Blacks gave predominantly positive responses (ranging from 72.7% to 90.9%) on all items except the one about experiences outside of class, for which the predominant response was undecided (45.5%).

Among Whites, the most-positive responses were for how much was learned (80%) and enjoyment of the class (76%). Among Hispanics, the most-positive responses were for enjoyment of the class (88.6%) and how much was learned (84.4%). Except for a slight difference on satisfaction with grades, Hispanics were more positive on every item than were Whites.

Whites were more negative than Hispanics on four items. Hispanics were more negative only in feelings about grades (12.3% vs. 10.3%) and knowing teachers (16.6% vs. 14.3%). Whites were more undecided than Hispanics on every item.

Thus, it can be said that Hispanics were generally less negative, more positive, and less undecided than Whites, not only overall but also for almost every item individually.

When the questions are grouped, it can be seen that Whites are more-positive and less-negative about the task-related questions than about the relationship-related ones. The same is true for Blacks and Hispanics.

Table 21
Percentages of Respondents' Feelings About Del Mar by Ethnicity.

7. There are many ways that people describe their feelings about Del Mar. I'll read some of these. For each one, please tell me whether you felt positive or negative--or undecided.

Items	White*	Black*	Hispanic*
My grades.			
Negative	10.3	0.0	12.3
Positive	69.1	72.7	68.7
Undecided	20.6	27.3	19.0
How much I learned.			
Negative	6.9	9.0	6.2
Positive	80.0	90.9	84.4
Undecided	12.6	0.0	9.5
What I learned that helped on my job or elsewhere.			
Negative	19.4	9.0	18.5
Positive	53.1	81.8	63.5
Undecided	27.4	9.0	18.0
My enjoyment of the class.			
Negative	7.4	0.0	5.7
Positive	76.0	90.9	88.6
Undecided	16.6	9.0	5.7
Things that happened at school but not in class.			
Negative	21.7	27.3	20.9
Positive	42.9	27.3	52.1
Undecided	35.4	45.5	27.0
How well I got to know the teachers.			
Negative	14.3	18.2	16.6
Positive	69.1	72.7	70.6
Undecided	16.6	9.0	12.8
Average of all items			
Negative	13.3	10.6	10.5
Positive	65.0	72.7	71.3
Undecided	21.5	15.1	15.3
Average of task-related items			
Negative	12.2	6.0	12.3
Positive	67.4	81.8	72.2
Undecided	20.2	12.1	15.5
Average of non-task-related items			
Negative	14.5	15.2	14.4
Positive	62.7	63.6	70.4
Undecided	22.9	18.5	15.2

*N=175 Whites, 11 Blacks, 211 Hispanics; these are the numbers on which percentages were figured in each column.

General Comments

At the end of the questionnaire, was the question, "Is there anything else you would like to tell Del Mar?" It was intended to offer a chance for comments about anything that was important to the individual but which had not been mentioned in the structured interview. Almost one-half (199) of the respondents made some comment. This degree of response seems to indicate that the whole interview process was well-received and the respondent was not in an undue hurry to end the interview.

Table 22 tabulates the comments by groupings that arose out of the comments themselves. The largest category under this section was global positive comments about Del Mar, which received 80 mentions. The comments ranged from "excellent college\ good school" to "enjoyed it," "treated well," and "great school and facilities." Under positive comments about instructors, 25 mentions occurred, such as "great teachers," and "wonderful profs."

Under negative comments about instructors, 18 mentions occurred, with comments such as foreign profs being hard to understand and night profs being less qualified. Another category was parking, which received 17 negative mentions.

On the positive side, 15 respondents commented "I'll be back" on this last question, wanting the interviewer and Del Mar to know, it seemed, that their dropping out was only temporary.

Other groupings included four comments on need for both financial aid and childcare; three comments on need to improve registration; and one comment each negative to Del Mar libraries, counseling, placement, and learning disabilities services. All the other miscellaneous comments under this section had one mention only in regard to such matters as Del Mar needing more clubs and social life; request to keep tuition down, request for more weekend and telecourse classes, request for more math help and more smoking sections, and need for more computer lab time and larger classrooms.

Table 22
Comments About Anything Else.

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell Del Mar?

Category	Responses
Positive about Del Mar	80
Positive about instructors	25
Positive about returning	15
Negative about instructors	18
Negative about parking	17
Need financial aid	4
Need childcare	4

PART 5

SUMMARY

The immediate purpose of this research was to learn more about the persons who attended Del Mar College during fall 1990 but did not enroll for spring 1991. The ultimate purpose is to maximize the number of students who accomplish their educational goals, whatever those goals are.

This summary includes discussions of the demographic characteristics of 2,313 nonreturnees as compared to the student body and as revealed by school records, comparisons of 642 unreachable nonreturnees to the total group of nonreturnees, comparisons of survey respondents with the total group of nonreturnees, and responses of 399 nonreturnees to a telephone interview conducted by Del Mar students. For readability, percentages have been rounded to whole numbers in this summary.

Nonreturnees Compared to the Student Body

There were 2,313 nonreturnees from a student body of 10,538. Males were overrepresented among nonreturnees, at 44% as compared to slightly less than 40% in the student body. White non-Hispanics were slightly overrepresented, at 48% as compared to 47% in the student body. Hispanics wee slightly underrepresented among nonreturnees, at 47% as compared to 49% in the student body. The numbers of American Indian/Alaskan native; Black, non-Hispanic; Asian/Pacific Islander; and nonresident alien were small but comparable across the nonreturnee group and the student body.

Among nonreturnees, only 32% were full-time students, while in the whole student body almost 35% were full-time students. Furthermore, the number of part-time nonreturnees is even greater, because nonreturnees taking only 1-3 hours were not included in the study.

Nonreturnees Further Described

Within the whole group of nonreturnees, the breakdown into female Hispanic and white, and male Hispanic and White was about the same: 27% female and 21% male. Other ethnic groups accounted for only about 4.5% of total nonreturnees, with Blacks accounting for 3%.

Three majors had nonreturnees totaling more than 100: business administration, 211; pre-education (secondary), 120; and criminal justice technician, 105. When majors were grouped by

academic, vocational, and undeclared, the number of academic and vocational majors was about equal and was about twice that of undeclared majors. Male and female nonreturnees seemed alike in their distribution among these three types of majors. Hispanics were more likely not to return to vocational majors, while Whites were more likely not to return to academic majors or to undeclared majors.

Four measures of academic history were used to describe nonreturnees: hours completed before fall 1990, hours attempted and completed during fall, grade point average for fall, and academic standing at the end of fall.

In terms of previous work at Del Mar, 23% of nonreturnees had none; thus, they had their first taste of college and decided not to return. Another 36% had only 1-24 hours of credit, 28% had 25-60 hours, and 14% had more than the 60 hours usually considered necessary for completing a community college program of two years.

Among nonreturnees during the fall semester, almost 69% were taking fewer than 12 hours, a mark often used to determine full-time enrollment. (Nonreturnees taking only 1-3 hours were not included in this study, so this percentage of part-timers is underestimated.) Overall, nonreturnees completed fewer hours than they registered for; 17% withdrew from all courses and about 76% completed 1-12 hours.

Besides the 17% who withdrew from all classes, there were 23% who made all F's. At the other extreme, however, almost one-third maintained A or B averages; in fact, more than 7% earned all A's. Blacks had the smallest portion of those who did not finish the semester but the largest group with grades below 1.01. Whites had the highest portion of those getting top grades (3.01-4.00) and Hispanics had the lowest. Whites, though, had the highest portion of those dropping all classes.

Females were more likely than males to have dropped all classes (28% of all nonreturnees vs. 16%). Males, however, were more likely to have failing grades; 39% of nonreturnees were males who earned a GPA of less than 1.01, while 22% were females. Academic majors (14%) were less likely than vocational majors (20% or undeclared majors (17%) to have dropped all courses. Generally, vocational majors had lower grades than either of the other two groups.

At the end of fall semester, 1,669 persons in good academic standing decided not to return to Del Mar the next semester. Probation would have been the fate for 517 if they had returned; Blacks had the highest proportion who would have been on probation, Whites the lowest. Only 127 nonreturnees were placed on academic suspension and were not permitted to return for spring. Hispanic males had the highest rate of suspension (8%). When probation and suspension are taken together, noticeable academic

difficulty was experienced by more than 35% of Hispanics and more than 38% of Blacks who did not return for the next semester.

Nonreturnees Who Were Unreachable by Telephone

In the process of accumulating the required number of completed questionnaires, interviewers determined that 642 of the nonreturnees were unreachable. No other nonreturnees were contacted.

Almost 18% of the unreachables should not have been on the nonreturnee list, because they had transferred, graduated, etc. More than half of the unreachables (almost 54%) were unreachable because of the telephone format, with telephone disconnected or wrong numbers listed on school records, or no one being at home for three calls.

Almost 24% had relocated. It is impossible to know whether they had moved beyond Del Mar's attendance area, although that assumption was made as a worst-case scenario for counting dropouts. However, 26 of these persons had left the area for military service during the Persian Gulf crisis; it is believed that they will return to Corpus Christi, and they were not counted as dropouts.

It is possible that, among the 18 persons who refused to answer the survey, there were some on academic suspension, as none of them was reached otherwise.

In terms of percentage of unreachable nonreturnees as compared to total nonreturnees, Hispanics and Blacks were only slightly overrepresented among unreachables. They were correctly represented in terms of percentages answering the questionnaire; thus, the difference was that greater proportions of Hispanics and Blacks were called by chance.

This method of gathering data by telephone seems appropriate in terms of the mix of persons to be interviewed. While it will be necessary to make five phone calls in order to complete each two questionnaires, this method produced better results than the typically low response rates for mailed questionnaires to nonreturnees.

Dropouts, Stopouts, and Optouts

A major portion of the study was an attempt to determine the proportion of dropouts, stopouts, and optouts among the 2,313 nonreturnees. Dropouts are persons who did not complete their educational goals and do not plan to do so. Stopouts are persons who did not complete their educational goals but have fairly definite plans to do so. Optouts are persons who did complete their educational goals.

Researchers attempted to determine the number of dropouts, stopouts, and optouts among the 1,041 nonreturnees who were either interviewed (399) or judged to be unreachable (642). The first step was to identify the number who should not have been included on the list to be contacted, given the definition of nonreturnees; 113 persons were identified in this category.

Second, it was determined that as many as 127 who had "moved' or "moved away" and as many as 166 whose phones had been disconnected might be dropouts; this is a worst-case scenario, because this group could also include optouts and stopouts. Based on the questionnaire findings, 11 of the 399 respondents definitely classified themselves as dropouts. Thus, 304 of the 1,041 nonreturnees are tentatively called dropouts.

Eighty-two persons who completed the survey classified themselves as optouts. While there likely were optouts among the unreachables, there is no way to determine this.

On the basis of survey answers, 303 persons classified themselves as stopouts. Again, it is not possible to tell how many of the unreachables were stopouts.

In summary, 113 persons should not have been on the nonreturnee list among the 1,041 studied; 304 were estimated to be dropouts; 82 indicated they were optouts; 303 indicated they were stopouts; and 239, mostly unreachables, could not be even provisionally classified with existing information.

Two kinds of extrapolation may be helpful in seeing the global meaning of these findings, although these figures should not be quoted as verified. The first extrapolation has to do with classifying the 239 who could not be classified with existing information. If they were distributed proportionally among the other categories, there would then be a total of 147 (14%) who should be subtracted from the nonreturnees list, 395 (38%) dropouts, 106 (10%) optouts, and 393 (38%) stopouts.

The second extrapolation uses the proportions just figured in order to classify the total 2,313 nonreturnees. Thus, there may have been 326 persons who should not have been on the list, leaving a total of 1,987 nonreturnees. Among those nonreturnees, 877 might be dropouts, 236 optouts, and 874 stopouts.

Again, emphasis must be made that these last figures are only estimates, made for the sake of perspective.

What can be said is that it is grossly overstating the problem to believe that the number of self-perceived dropouts is anywhere nearly as large as 2,313.

Comparison of Respondents and Unreachables to Total Nonreturnees

In interpreting questionnaire findings, it is important to know whether those reached for the questionnaire are representative of the larger group from which they were drawn. To evaluate the use of telephones for gathering such data, it is also necessary to compare unreachables to the total of nonreturnees.

Females were a larger portion of the respondents (62%) than of the total of nonreturnees (56%). Perhaps they were more likely than males to be at home during the times when calls were made. On the other hand, females were more likely than males to be unreachable after three calls. Hispanics were overrepresented among respondents (53%) when compared to the total group (47%). White non-Hispanics were underrepresented (44% vs. 48) in the total population). Other ethnic groups had about the same percentages in the respondent group and in the total group.

Averages of previous hours earned were somewhat different for respondents (almost 22 hours) as compared to the total group (a little over 29 hours). Missing from the respondent group were the extremely high numbers of hours (up to 279) earned by some in the total group. This omission may be beneficial, as the respondents tended to fall within the more normal range of earned hours for a community college.

When major fields of study are grouped by academic, vocational, and undeclared, there is a larger portion of vocational majors among respondents (43%) than in the total group (40%). Those without declared majors are underrepresented (18% vs. 21%).

In comparing unreachables with the total of nonreturnees, it was found that the distribution by gender was properly balanced but that Hispanics were again overrepresented (52% vs. 47% for all nonreturnees)d and White non-Hispanics were again underrepresented (42% vs. 48% for all nonreturnees). Blacks were also overrepresented among unreachables (4% vs. 3% for all nonreturnees).

Unreachables were more like the respondents than like the whole group of nonreturnees in terms of the number of hours of credit earned before fall. As with respondents, the unreachables did not include persons with extremely high total hours. Slightly more of the unreachables were undeclared majors (23% vs. 21% in the total population); the difference was split between academic and vocational majors, so that a smaller differences were evident there.

In summary, the group of respondents differed from the population from which it was drawn in containing larger portions of females, Hispanics, and vocational majors. It also differed

in not including persons with extremely high numbers of hours earned previously. The group of unreachables differed from the population in containing larger portions of Hispanics, Blacks, and undeclared majors. They also differed in not including persons with extremely high numbers of hours earned previously.

The respondents seem to be enough like the total of nonreturnees that generalizations can be made to the whole population. The unreachables seem to be enough like the total of nonreturnees that use of the telephone does not render some segments of nonreturnees more unreachable than others.

Questionnaire Findings

A total of 399 nonreturnees completed a telephone questionnaire. Responses related to classifying persons as dropouts, stopouts, and optouts have already been summarized. This section presents the rest of the questionnaire findings.

Original goal. More than half of the respondents indicated their original goal in attending Del Mar was to complete a program of study, while more than one-fifth intended to complete courses needed to transfer to another school. Thus, 75% could not accurately claim to have accomplished their goals.

Reasons for not returning. The questionnaire included six major categories of reasons why persons might not have returned, and gave chances for elaborating on four of those reasons. Multiple responses were allowed, thus totals exceed 100%.

Only 30 (8%) indicated they did not return because they had accomplished their goals; this number conflicts somewhat with the larger number (82) who said earlier in the interview that they had accomplished their original goals.

Three reasons for not returning had to do with the lives of respondents: lack of money (170, or 43%), lack of time (172, or 43%), and other events or circumstances in their lives (264, or 66%). Two factors dealt with Del Mar: 59 (15%) were unhappy with what they got in classes; 60 (15%) were unhappy with something else about the school. Thus, by far the greatest concerns were with life in general and not with school in particular.

Within the category of "lack of money," responses relating directly to school expenses (tuition, transportation, books or supplies, financial aid) were about twice as numerous as those relating to living expenses (care of child or someone else, rent, medical expenses, family, unusual expenses, general expenses). Within the category of "lack of time," there were a large number of voluntary responses that could not be categorized; then, of about equal size were ones related directly to school, ones related to home responsibilities, and ones related to work.

In the category of "other events and circumstances in my life," the largest subcategories that could be formed by analysts (job/work, and personal and home) seemed redundant of responses in the lack-of-money and lack-of-time category. They emphasize the degree of concern over these factors in the thinking of respondents. Overall, work-related problems seemed to play a major role in student inability to stay in school. While childcare concerns were much less numerous, they were mentioned multiple times by some persons, indicating they are major obstacles to those who have this concern.

Although only 15% of respondents indicated they had difficulty with classes and 15% indicated they had difficulty with something else about the school, these responses should be examined carefully, because they are most directly within Del Mar's control. Among the 18 negative responses about instructors, no pattern was evident. Ten persons mentioned parking problems serious enough to keep them from returning to school.

When the same information on reasons for not returning is analyzed by gender, it is clear that personal reasons outnumber school-related ones for both males and females. Money and time were the bigger problems for males; other circumstances of life were bigger problems for females. Females had more problems with classes; males had more problems with other aspects of school.

In terms of ethnicity, Whites (71%), Blacks (82%), and Hispanics (62%) each listed other circumstances of life most frequently. As a second most-frequent response, however, Whites listed lack of time (44%), Hispanics listed lack of money (46%), and Blacks gave equal weight to time and money (46%). In contrast with Whites and Hispanics, Blacks were most unhappy with classes and other things about school (18% each).

To put these findings in perspective, it is important to note that the great majority (76%) of respondents indicated they plan to return to Del Mar for further study. Thus, they must either see the problems as ones they can eventually overcome or have no basis for their optimism about returning.

Reasons for Attending Del Mar

Two other sections of the questionnaire asked for responses that would show feelings about Del Mar. One asked respondents to answer yes or no about which reasons they had for attending Del Mar.

A surprising 90% indicated that one reason was for personal improvement, while 67% said they wanted to be with interesting people. The next three highest options, however, were task-related: getting job skills (62%), getting courses to transfer (53%), and getting a credential for work (47%).

Equally surprising are some of the differences between males and females in terms of reasons for attending. Males were even more interested in personal improvement than were females, and they more often took courses to transfer. Females were more interested in job skills than were males.

Hispanics gave more positive responses than Whites to 10 of the 11 items, with Whites exceeding them only in the percentage seeking transfer credit. Thus, Hispanics feel the community college serves a wide variety of purposes, both social and goal-oriented. Blacks have even larger percentages of positive responses, although their actual numbers are small and thus more susceptible to distortion.

A caution should be noted about the findings related to this question and the next. There is no way to compare the reactions of these nonreturnees to those of students who remained in school. On one hand, then, it is important not to generalize these findings to the whole student body. On the other hand, it is important not to assume that these findings differentiate between nonreturnees and continuously enrolled students.

Feelings About Del Mar

One question asked how respondents felt about different aspects of life at Del Mar. It was placed in the questionnaire before the one about why persons had not returned. This question gave a chance to express negative opinions even if they were not strong enough to be factors in deciding not to return. Choices of response were negative, positive, and undecided. The preponderance of responses was positive: about enjoyment of class (83%), how much was learned (83%), how well the student got to know teachers (70%), grades (70%), and usefulness of learning (60%). The only item with less than half positive responses (48%) was "Things that happened at school but not in class," which received both the most negative votes (21%) and the most undecided (31%). It is possible that the large portion of undecided responses means the question was too vague to stimulate meaningful evaluation.

The fewest negative and fewest undecided responses were toward how much students had learned and toward their enjoyment of class. More, however, were negative or undecided about the usefulness of what they had learned. It should also be noted that items with highest number of negative votes also received the highest number of undecided votes. It is possible that an "undecided" vote was a polite "non-positive" vote.

In terms of gender, females were more positive about grades and how much they had learned; they were conversely more negative about grades, about the usefulness of what they learned, and about things that happened outside of class. Males were more positive about things that happened outside of class but more

negative about their enjoyment of class. These tendencies might be interpreted in light of tendencies on the previous question for females to be more task-oriented in their reasons for attending Del Mar. Overall on the six items, females were more negative and equally positive, while males were more undecided. However, when the three task-oriented items were grouped separately from the non-task-oriented ones (which might be labeled relationship-oriented), females were both more negative and more positive than males on the task-related items. Males were considerably more ambivalent on these items. On the other hand, males were more positive on the relationship-related items; females were both more negative and more undecided. While females are more satisfied with task-related experiences, they have less of a sense that their social needs are being met.

When responses were analyzed according to ethnicity, Blacks gave the highest percentages of positive responses on five of the six items, rating only the out-of-class experiences as predominantly undecided. Hispanics were higher than Whites in positive ratings on everything except satisfaction with grades. Overall, Whites were most negative and most undecided, and Blacks were slightly more positive than Hispanics. In terms of the task-related items, Blacks were definitely the most positive and least negative. For relationship-related items, Hispanics were the most positive and Whites were the most undecided.

General Comments

At the end of the questionnaire was a catchall question, "Is there anything else you would like to tell Del Mar?" Almost half of the respondents had enough interest in the survey to make additional comments. The comments were overwhelmingly positive--about Del Mar, about its instructors, and about the students' expectations for returning. Some negative comments were recorded about instructors and parking, and need was expressed for childcare and financial aid.

PART 6

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ACTION

The ultimate purpose of this research is to maximize the number of students who accomplish the educational goals they had when they enrolled at Del Mar College. This section suggests what may be done with these research findings in order to accomplish that purpose. Probably the most important implications and courses of action, however, will be those determined by the persons at DMC who will actually carry out the actions. The suggestions given here are just that: suggestions.

Two types of suggestions are made: ones about further research, and ones about action.

Further Research

Research Suggestion 1. Make the study of nonreturnees an ongoing part of institutional research. Studies like Part 2 of this report can be done without gathering more data than you already have. Surveys can be used to gather additional data, like that in Part 4 of the report. Once a process is in place, additional research will be easier to accomplish.

Research Suggestion 2. Repeat this study with persons who are present during a spring or summer but do not return the next fall. It is possible that findings will differ in important ways from ones coming out of this study.

Research Suggestion 3. Use telephone surveys rather than mailed ones, to get information on nonreturnees. This research has shown that telephoning produces a good "return rate," whereas mail surveys of nonreturnees notoriously have a low rate of response. This research also shows that telephone results are not seriously biased on terms of gender or ethnicity.

Research Suggestion 4. Use students as interviewers for telephone surveys. The experience is good for those interested in doing such research. It provides a service opportunity for student groups and gives students a way to support the school. It may heighten student awareness of the desirability of being continuously enrolled. And it is probably less threatening for nonreturnees to be interviewed by students than by officials of the college. Finally, of course, this is a way to provide the personnel and time needed to do the work.

Research Suggestion 5. Involve a broad spectrum of faculty and staff in designing further study, because of the next suggestion.

Research Suggestion 6. Do some projects of limited scope, in response to specific concerns. Do these for the people who are ready and able to work on a specific problem. For instance, a department with a high portion of nonreturnees may ask to have its majors studied in depth. Other parts of the college may be interested in studying only one ethnic group, one age group, or one gender at a time, in order to plan specifically for that portion of the student body. When research plans originate with those who will implement the findings, it seems, there is the greatest likelihood of action resulting from the research.

Research Suggestion 7. Plan some research that discovers how continuously enrolled students feel about the college. Some of the items on the nonreturnee questionnaire (e.g., reasons people attend Del Mar) can just as logically be asked of persons who are still enrolled. This report mentioned several times that the meaning of the nonreturnee findings cannot be thoroughly explored without knowing whether and how nonreturnees differ from continuously enrolled students. Furthermore, there may be other questions you want to ask those who are currently in school.

Research Suggestion 8. Do some qualitative or naturalistic research also. Survey research produces countable results, and those are important. Sometimes, however, Del Mar may also profit from in-depth studies of a few people. The results of such research sound like stories, not like statistics. In-depth, conversational interviews may produce more holistic--and thus, more accurate--pictures of why some students do not persist.

Action

Action Suggestion 1. Tell the community about Del Mar: how many nonreturnees actually do intend to come back to school; how positive the people are about Del Mar, even when those people have some reason for not being in school at the moment; how concerned Del Mar is with helping people accomplish their educational goals.

Action Suggestion 2. Ask different groups of faculty and staff to study the research findings for possible implications for their own work. (There is a close connection between this suggestion and the one about having such groups plan more research!) Some of these faculty and staff groupings may be obvious, because they are based on job assignment. Others may be especially formed task forces. For instance, a task force may be needed to do a focused study on Black students at Del Mar. The findings in this report hint at some areas for further exploration; but the small proportion of Blacks within the whole school mean that, in a well-proportioned study of all ethnic groups, there will not be enough Blacks to make the results dependable.

Action Suggestion 3. Be cautious about using the word "dropout" to refer to all nonreturnees. A large portion of

nonreturnees apparently intend to resume their studies at a later time. It is inaccurate and discouraging to label them dropouts.

Action Suggestion 4. Del Mar probably should focus its efforts on helping stopouts stay in school. These are people who intend to return to school. Unfortunately, statistics predict that many will not do what they intend. Two questions then become relevant: What can be done to help people return to school after they have been out for a semester or longer? What can be done to help people maintain continuous enrollment, so that they do not move from being intended stopouts to being actual dropouts?

Action Suggestion 5. Plan some way to keep first-time enrollees in school for a second semester. An orientation program might need added elements to speak to the causes for not returning after that first semester. More counseling time might be devoted to first-time students. More efforts at social activities may be needed, especially for those who have recently graduated from high school.

Action Suggestion 6. Consider whether an orientation program is needed for returning students, not just for first-time students. Offering it during the semester, so that the person can return to campus even when not enrolled, may create a bridge to facilitate re-enrollment. Perhaps the orientation could be tied to the actual registration process.

Action Suggestion 7. Redouble efforts to identify persons at risk academically and to provide help to them. While some people could not return because of being placed on academic suspension, many more were just not doing well when they chose not to return. It is probable that the academic probation and suspension rates are depressed by the voluntary withdrawal of persons who anticipate being placed in those categories.

Action Suggestion 8. Consider that gender and ethnicity may cause differences in why people do not persist in college. To the extent that this is true, different retention plans are needed for different groups. For instance, women may need social support systems and acknowledgment of their acceptable academic performance, while men may need more remedial help with classwork.

Action Suggestion 9. Consider the possibility of offering child care in a facility near the campus. Do not limit availability to times parents are actually in class, as they will need time for library and lab work, etc. Child care must be less expensive than what is now available to students, as child care was listed as a financial concern.

Action Suggestion 10. Offer a short course in money management for the part-time college student. Budgeting for school expenses probably is not given much attention in generic

instruction on money management. This short course might be incorporated into an orientation program for new/returning students.

Action Suggestion 11. When working individually with students who are planning not to return for the next semester, encourage them to be as specific as possible about when they will return and how they will overcome the cause of their not-returning.

Action Suggestion 12. Find ways to work with major businesses in the community (major is defined as having many employees who attend Del Mar) to give employees time rewards for attending college. The greatest problems nonreturnees had with time were work related.

Action Suggestion 13. Find ways in and out of class to help students find personal meaning in what they are learning, so that the learning contributes to their strong desire for self-improvement.

Action Suggestion 14. Use group learning methods (small groups in class and the option of group work outside of class) to speak to the desire of students to be with interesting people. Use interactive methods as opposed to ones that only call for the learner to listen. Use sparingly, though, outside-of-class group assignments. They exacerbate time problems that students already have.

Action Suggestion 15. Convince students that faculty and staff are interesting people. Make time for students as human beings. Create social events that link students with their teachers. Do not hesitate to let students take the lead in planning such activities and in helping to establish the social climate.

Action Suggestion 16. Actively build a climate that takes seriously the academic and job-seeking goals of women students; do not assume these are goals held only by men. Actively build a climate that provides social support for men, especially Hispanic men. Again, do not hesitate to let students take the lead in creating such climate.

Action Suggestion 17. Continue to help students seek grants and loans to finance their schooling. Remember, however, that they identify many non-financial and non-school-related reasons for not returning to college. Most of these reasons have to do with juggling the multiple roles of the adult who is only a part-time student.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Non-returnees by Major

Major	Frequency	Major	Frequency
Business Admin.	211	Voc. Nurse Education	29
Hotel/Motel Mgt.	4	Regis. Nursing	99
Restaurant Mgt.	26	Pre-Dental	10
Market/Retail Mgt.	17	Pre-Medical	35
Real Estate	9	Pre-Pharmacy	11
Industrial Mgt.	13	Pre-Vet. Medicine	2
Accounting Assoc.	53	Early Child. Spec.	23
Banking and Finance	20	Early Child. Admin.	3
Computer Operator	29	Culinary Arts	4
Computer Programmer	36	Pre-Law	36
Court Reporting	25	Legal Assisting	55
Prof. Legal Sec.	21	English	15
Prof. Sec.	24	Speech	4
Clerk Typist	16	Liberal Arts	44
General Office	15	Biology	31
Journalism	11	Mathematics	12
Radio/Television	19	Chemistry	5
Computer Science	41	Geology	4
Micro. for Business	11	Physics	2
Cosmetology Instr.	20	Psychology	61
Pre-Ed (Sec.)	120	Criminal Just. Tech.	105
Art Education	5	Fire Science	7
Pre-Ed (English)	48	Public Admin.	6
Health Studies	6	Social Work	5
Music Education	12	History	8
Kinesiology	37	Political Science	9
Pre-Engineering	27	Sociology	8
Electrical Engineering	23	Elec./Commu. Serv.	19
Archi. Technology	15	Appliance Appl. Tech.	7
Drafting Technology	16	A/C Appl. Tech.	15
Elec. Eng. Tech.	15	Auto Body Tech.	1
Foreign Language	1	Automotive Tech.	13
Dental Assisting	5	Diesel Mech.	5
Dental Hygiene	6	Industrial Machining	8
Radiologic Tech.	45	Welding Tech.	7
Respiratory Ther.	19	Drama	7
Surgical Tech.	9	Art (Studio)	26
Diag. Med. Sonogr.	3	Music (Applied)	5
Med. Lab. Tech.	16	Music Theory/Compos.	4
Pre-Medical Tech.	5	Undeclared	481
Mental Health Assoc.	28		

APPENDIX B
COMPARISON OF ALL NONRETURNEES WITH THOSE INTERVIEWED AND UNREACHABLE

It is important to see whether the persons interviewed can be described as representative of the entire population of nonreturnees. A similar question is whether the unreachable nonreturnees have the same demographic characteristics as the entire population. Comparisons are made here in terms of gender, ethnicity, credit hours completed at Del Mar before fall 1990, and type of major (academic, vocational, or undeclared).

Table B.1 explores the gender distribution among the entire population, the unreachables, and the respondents. The respondent group includes a larger portion of females than does the total population, so that responses to the questionnaire may overrepresent the views of women. There may have been more women respondents because women spend more time at home than men do; thus, they can be reached by telephone. The unreachable group, however, does not show a higher percentage of males; thus, another possible explanation is that more females were reached just by chance.

Table B.2 explores the ethnic distribution among the entire population, the unreachables, and the respondents. Whites are underrepresented and Hispanics overrepresented among respondents, although not heavily so. Representation of other ethnic groups seems appropriate in relation to their proportion in the total population. (The telephone survey as a method of studying dropout among different ethnic groups seems a reasonable alternative from this standpoint.) Because most nonreturnees are either White or Hispanic, the findings for other groups are based on small numbers and will always have to be interpreted with caution when they are part of a large survey. Thus, there may be times when Del Mar wishes to survey just the less populous ethnic groups.

Among unreachables, Hispanics and Blacks are overrepresented, but not extremely so. Because Hispanics are also overrepresented among respondents, it is likely that more were chosen for calling by chance.

Table B.3 explores the number of hours of academic credit received by all nonreturnees, by unreachables, and by respondents prior to their not returning in spring 1991. With more categories in this table than in the previous ones, there is more possibility for the groups not to be alike. When the population and respondents are compared, the population has a higher mean and median. The high numbers of previous hours (above 36 hours, for instance) are underrepresented among persons who completed the telephone survey. This trend may not be harmful, as the motives and needs of persons with many hours of credit may be different from those of the bulk of students.

Table B.1
Gender Distribution of Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents.

Group	Female	Male	Total
Population	1295 (56.0)	1018 (44.0)	2313
Unreachables	361 (56.2)	281 (43.8)	642
Respondents	248 (62.0)	151 (38.0)	399

Table B.2
Ethnic Distribution of Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents.

Ethnicity	Population	Unreachables	Respondents
White, non-Hispanic	1111 (48.0)	272 (42.4)	175 (43.9)
American Indian or Alaskan Eskimo	7 (0.3)	2 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Black, non-Hispanic	70 (3.0)	25 (3.9)	11 (2.8)
Asian	26 (1.1)	8 (1.2)	1 (0.3)
Hispanic	1096 (47.4)	333 (51.9)	211 (52.9)
Nonresident Alien	3 (0.1)	2 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
Totals	2313	642	399

Table B.3
Hours of Academic Credit Received Before Spring 1991 by Population of Nonreturnees and by Samples of Unreachables and Respondents.

Hours	Population	Unreachables	Respondents
Mean	29.344	23.039	21.539
Median	18.000	14.500	14.000
0	532 (23.0)	105 (16.4)	59 (14.8)
1-12	436 (18.9)	194 (30.2)	133 (33.3)
13-24	375 (17.2)	122 (19.0)	75 (18.8)
25-36	273 (11.8)	65 (10.1)	60 (15.1)
37-48	194 (8.4)	41 (6.4)	24 (6.0)
49-60	191 (8.2)	50 (7.8)	16 (4.0)
61-72	93 (4.0)	39 (6.1)	9 (2.2)
73-84	66 (2.9)	16 (2.4)	6 (1.5)
85-96	42 (1.8)	7 (1.1)	5 (1.3)
97+	111* (4.8)	3** (0.5)	12*** (3.0)
TOTALS	2313	642	399

*Maximum hours=279
**Maximum hours=124
***Maximum hours=124

The pattern for unreachables in relation to hours completed is much like that for respondents, with mean and median being lower than for the total population. For the same reasons this distortion may be helpful for interpreting respondent findings, it may be helpful for interpreting findings related to unreachables.

Table B.4 explores the breakdown by type of major (academic, vocational, and undeclared) for the total population of nonreturnees and for the unreachables and respondents. The population and the respondents match closely in terms of the majors represented, with just a small overrepresentation of vocational nonreturnees and a small underrepresentation of undeclared majors.

In contrast, vocational-major unreachables were slightly underrepresented and undeclared-major unreachables were slightly overrepresented.

Table B.4
Type of Major by Population of Nonreturnees and Samples of Unreachables and Respondents.

Type of Major	Population	Unreachables	Respondents
Academic	910	247	157
	(39.3)	(38.5)	(39.3)
Vocational	922	247	171
	(39.9)	(38.5)	(42.9)
Undeclared	481	148	71
	(20.8)	(23.1)	(17.8)
TOTAL	2313	642	399

APPENDIX C

DEL MAR UNREACHABLES

All nonreturning students were randomly ordered for contacting and interviewing. As interviewers determined a person was unreachable, that person was put into the unreachable category. When interviewers had completed the required number of interviews, the unreachables were tallied. No further study was done of the remaining 1,272 nonreturnees. This section describes the characteristics of the unreachables, the chief reason being to assure that no group was systematically excluded from the survey.

Six-hundred and forty-two students were not able to be questioned by the telephone survey for various reasons. Although they were unavailable to be questioned, some demographic information about them was available through school records which was compiled. This information included: gender, ethnicity, major, and hours completed plus reasons they were unable to be contacted. Table C.1 shows a breakdown of figures involving the unreachable students.

One hundred and thirteen (17.6%) of these individuals should not have been on the list to be contacted. Ninety-two (14.3%) had transferred to another school. A small number of students who were inappropriately included on the survey contact list were fourteen (2.2%) who were currently enrolled and two students who had not been enrolled in the fall semester. Another four students had graduated and one was deceased.

Secondly, over half of the inaccessible students were not available because of problems regarding the telephone. Those with whom an attempt at contact was made at least three times with no answer were not telephoned again. Ninety-one (14.2%) students fell into this category. A large number (166, 25.9%) of unavailable students had their phone disconnected. Another eighty-eight (13.7%) who answered their telephone claimed to be the wrong number.

Third, some of the students were inaccessible because of their current location. Eighty-nine (13.9%) of the contacts said that the student had "moved" with no specific additional information offered. These students could have moved within the current neighborhood or city or could have moved out of the city or state. An additional thirty-eight (5.9%) students were said to have "moved away" which implies a long-distance move. Another twenty-six (4.0%) were on active military duty in another location.

Lastly, there were thirteen (2.0%) students who did not fall into any suitable category and were tallied as miscellaneous non-included students. Plus, eighteen (2.8%) students refused to answer the survey.

Table C.1
Reasons Why Students Were Inaccessible for Survey.

Reason Inaccessible	Frequency/Percent
Should Not Have Been On List	
Transferred to other school	92 (14.3)
Currently enrolled	14 (2.2)
Graduated	4 (0.6)
Did not take fall class	2 (0.3)
Deceased	1 (0.2)
Total	113 (17.6)
Unreachable By Phone	
Phone disconnected	166 (25.9)
Tried three times	91 (14.2)
Wrong Number	88 (13.7)
Total	345 (53.8)
Location	
Moved	89 (13.9)
Moved away	38 (5.9)
Military service	26 (4.0)
Total	153 (23.8)
Miscellaneous	
Refused to answer survey	18 (2.8)
Miscellaneous	13 (2.0)
Total	31 (4.8)

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Those that would be most likely to be classified as dropouts from the four groups would be students who had moved and students whose phones had been disconnected. Those who cannot be classified in any category include those with a wrong number, the miscellaneous, and those with whom contact was attempted three times.

Gender/Ethnicity

The 642 unreachable students in the Del Mar study consisted of 281 males (43.8%) and 361 females (56.2%). These percentages are very close to the distributions of the entire population of nonreturnees. (See Table B.1 in Appendix B.)

The largest ethnic group represented in the distribution was Hispanic with 333 students (51.9%), followed by 272 (42.4%) White students, 25 (3.9%) Black students, 8 (1.2%) Asian students, 2 (.3%) students each in the Indian and Nonresident Alien category. Again, these percentages were very close to the distributions of the population of nonreturnees. (See Table B.2 in Appendix B.)

Table C.2 shows that there were more Hispanic women than any other classification (191, 57.6% of the Hispanic group). This is followed by White females (149), then Hispanic males (142) and White males (123), then Black females (15) and Black males (10).

Gender/Reasons for Not Contacting

Table C.3 indicates that there were more males among the unreachable students who had departed for the military. The main reasons that women were inaccessible was that their phones were disconnected, the wrong phone numbers were recorded, they had transferred, or the surveyors had made at least three attempts of contact without reaching them. Slightly more females had moved or moved away. Ten women and eight men refused to answer the survey.

Ethnicity/Reason for Not Contacting

Table C.4 shows that minorities were unable to be reached most often because they had been tried by telephone three times, their telephone was disconnected, the recorded number was wrong, or they had moved. Whites more often moved away or had transferred to another school. This may indicate that the telephone is less satisfactory for contacting minority students for survey purposes.

Table C.2
Type of Ethnicity and Gender Among Unreachables.

Ethnic Origin	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
White, non-Hispanic	123 (19.2)	149 (23.2)	272 (42.4)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1 (.15)	1 (.15)	2 (.3)
Black, non-Hispanic	10 (1.6)	15 (2.3)	25 (3.9)
Asian	4 (0.6)	4 (0.6)	8 (1.2)
Hispanic	142 (22.1)	191 (29.8)	333 (51.9)
Nonresident Alien	1 (.15)	1 (.15)	2 (0.3)
TOTAL	281 (43.8)	361 (56.2)	642

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Table C.3
Reasons For Not Contacting By Gender

	Gender		Total
Reasons	Male	Female	
Transferred	39 (6.1)	53 (8.3)	92 (14.35)
Currently Enrolled	10 (1.6)	4 (0.6)	14 (2.2)
Graduated	1 (0.2)	3 (0.4)	4 (0.6)
No fall enrollment	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	2 (0.3)
Deceased	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
Phone Disconnected	63 (9.8)	103 (16.0)	166 (25.9)
No answer 3 Times	39 (6.1)	52 (8.1)	91 (14.2)
Wrong Number	36 (5.6)	52 (8.1)	88 (13.7)
Moved	44 (6.9)	45 (7.0)	89 (13.9)
Moved away	15 (2.3)	23 (3.6)	38 (5.9)
Military Service	21 (3.2)	5 (0.8)	26 (4.0)
Refused to Answer survey	8 (1.2)	10 (1.6)	18 (2.8)
Miscellaneous	5 (0.8)	8 (1.2)	13 (2.0)
TOTAL	281 (43.8)	361 (56.2)	642

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Table C.4
Reasons For Not Contacting By Ethnicity

Reasons Not Contacted	Ethnicity Origin W	I	B	A	H	N*	Total
Tried Three Times	35 (5.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (.3)	0 (0.0)	54 (8.4)	0 (0.0)	91 (14.2)
Disconnected	66 (10.3)	1 (0.2)	7 (1.1)	1 (0.2)	91 (14.1)	0 (0.0)	166 (25.9)
Wrong Number	32 (5.0)	1 (0.2)	6 (0.9)	3 (0.5)	46 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	88 (13.7)
Moved	32 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.6)	1 (0.2)	52 (8.1)	0 (0.0)	89 (13.9)
Moved Away	21 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	14 (2.2)	2 (0.3)	38 (5.9)
Transferred	48 (7.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	1 (0.2)	41 (6.4)	0 (0.0)	92 (14.3)
Military	13 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	12 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	26 (4.0)
Other**	25 (3.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.5)	1 (0.2)	23 (3.5)	0 (0.0)	52 (8.1)
TOTAL	272 (43.3)	2 (0.3)	25 (3.9)	8 (1.5)	333 (51.7)	2 (0.3)	642

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

* W=White, Non-Hispanic; I=American Indian or Alaskan Native; B=Black, Non-Hispanic; A=Asian; H=Hispanic; N=Nonresident Alien.

**Other includes Refused, Deceased, Currently Enrolled, No Fall Enrollment, Graduated, and Miscellaneous that were listed separately in Table C.1.

Hours Completed

School records showed the number of hours of credit earned by each unreachable person before fall. Those with no previous credit numbered 105 (16.4%). Those with 1-12 hours numbered 192 (30.2%) and with 13-24, 122 (19.1%). Together, these three categories comprised nearly 66% of the unreachable students. (See Table B.3 in Appendix B.)

Table C.5 indicates that unreachable women comprised consistently higher numbers in all hour groups. Table C.6 shows the hours completed broken down by ethnicity. Blacks had a proportionately large number in the lower levels (80% with 36 or less hours) of hours compared to the rest of the unreachable students.

Hours Completed/Reasons Not Contacted

It is notable that, in the comparison in Table C.7, the main reason for the nonavailability of students with over 48 hours is transferring to another school. Since this is not a problem, it may be more useful to concentrate on the problems of those who have under 48 hours when considering dropout students.

Majors

Majors could be studied individually on the basis of school records. They could also be grouped for study as academic, vocational, or undeclared. Those students with academic majors numbered 247, (38.5%). There were also 247 students in the category of occupational majors and 148 (23%) undeclared majors. Included were the following most populous groups: 57 students with the major of Business Administration, 38 with the major Pre-Education (Secondary), 23 in Legal Assisting, and 33 with Criminal Justice.

The numbers of unreachable minority students are much higher in some majors. This is particularly noticeable in several health related professions such as Pre-Nursing, Pre-Dental, Pre-Med, Pre-Pharmacy, Registered Nursing, Radiological Technology., Mental Health, and Respiratory Technology.

Business Administration, Pre-Med, Pre-Law, Liberal Arts, Psychology, Restaurant Management, Accounting, Legal Assisting, Computer Programming, Diesel Mechanics, Criminal Justice, and Radiological Technology had larger numbers of unreachable students below 24 hours. Undecided Majors also had a very large number of unreachable students below 24 hours. The largest numbers of transferred unreachable students was in business administration, pre-education, and criminal justice.

Table C.5
Hours Completed and Gender Among Unreachables

Number of Hours	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
0 Hours	54 (8.4)	51 (8.0)	105 (16.4)
1-12	87 (13.6)	107 (16.6)	194 (30.2)
13-24	54 (8.4)	68 (10.4)	122 (19.0)
25-36	25 (3.9)	40 (6.2)	65 (10.1)
37-48	18 (2.8)	23 (3.6)	41 (6.4)
49-60	19 (3.0)	31 (4.8)	50 (7.8)
61-72	14 (2.1)	25 (3.9)	39 (6.0)
73-84	7 (1.1)	9 (1.4)	16 (2.5)
85-96	2 (0.3)	5 (0.8)	7 (1.1)
97+	1 (0.2)	2 (0.3)	3 (0.5)
TOTAL	281 (43.8)	361 (56.2)	642

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Table C.6
Number of Hours Completed and Ethnicity Among Unreachables.

Number of Hours	Ethnicity W	I	B	A	H	N*	Total
0 Hours	47 (7.3)	1 (0.2)	4 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	52 (8.1)	1 (0.2)	105 (16.4)
1-12	81 (12.6)	1 (0.2)	9 (1.4)	2 (0.3)	101 (15.7)	0 (0.0)	194 (30.2)
13-24	50 (7.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.6)	2 (0.3)	65 (10.1)	1 (0.2)	122 (19.0)
25-36	25 (3.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.5)	1 (0.2)	36 (5.4)	0 (0.0)	65 (10.0)
37-48	17 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)	22 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	41 (6.4)
49-60	24 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	2 (0.3)	22 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	50 (7.7)
61-72	21 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	39 (6.1)
73-84	4 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	11 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	16 (2.5)
85-96	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.2)
97+	2 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.5)

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

* W=White, Non-Hispanic; I=American Indian or Alaskan Native; B=Black, Non-Hispanic; A=Asian; H=Hispanic; N=Nonresident Alien.

Table C.7
Reasons Not Contacted and Under and Over 48 Hours Completed

Reasons Not Contacted	Under 48 Hours	Over 48 Hours	Total
Should Not Have Been On List			
Transferred to other school	41 (6.4)	51 (7.9)	92 (14.3)
Other (Currently enrolled, Graduated, Did not take fall class, Deceased)	17 (2.7)	4 (0.6)	21 (3.3)
			(113) (17.6)
Unreachable By Phone			
Phone disconnected, Tried three times, Wrong Number	300 (46.8)	45 (7.0)	347 (53.8)
Location			
Moved, Moved away, Military service	142 (22.1)	11 (1.7)	153 (23.8)
Miscellaneous			
Refused to answer survey, Miscellaneous	27 (4.2)	4 (0.6)	31 (4.8)

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Table C.8 indicates that unreachable students with academic majors were the most plentiful in the higher hour brackets. There were more students in vocational majors in the lower hour categories.

Table C.8
Number of Hours Completed and Major Area Among Unreachables

Number of Hours	Academic	Vocational	Undeclared
0 Hours	33 (5.1)	47 (7.3)	25 (3.9)
1-12	77 (12.0)	117 (18.2)	81 (12.6)
13-24	42 (6.5)	48 (7.5)	28 (4.4)
25-36	21 (3.3)	30 (4.7)	12 (1.9)
37-48	17 (2.6)	8 (1.2)	14 (2.2)
49-60	23 (3.6)	17 (2.6)	9 (1.4)
61-72	17 (2.6)	13 (2.0)	2 (0.3)
73-84	9 (1.4)	7 (1.1)	0 (0.0)
85-96	3 (0.5)	3 (0.5)	1 (0.2)
97+	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)

Note: Percentages (in parentheses) are based on the total of unreachables.

Questionnaire

My name is _____. I'm a student at Del Mar College. My organization, _____, is helping the college get some information from people who were enrolled last semester. Would you have about five minutes to help us by answering a few questions?

1. Is it correct that you enrolled for courses at Del Mar during fall semester?
   correct _____ incorrect _____

2. Are you currently enrolled for any Del Mar credit courses?
   Yes_____ No_____

3. Did you transfer to another school?
   yes ___ no ___

If person was <u>never</u> enrolled, is <u>now</u> enrolled, or has transferred, do not complete rest of questionnaire. Read paragraph at end of questionnaire.

4. When you first enrolled, which of these things did you want to accomplish? (Choose only one.)
   ____ Take one course or only a few courses.
   ____ Take as many courses as seemed interesting.
   ____ Complete courses needed to transfer to another school.
   ____ Complete a degree or certificate or some other kind of program of study.
   ____ Other. _____

5. Did you accomplish that goal?

____ yes . . . . . ____ no

5.a. Do you still plan to accomplish that goal?

___ yes . . . . . ___ no

Why do you not plan to accomplish it?

_____

_____

5.b. Do you plan to accomplish it at

___ this school ___ another school ___ undecided

5.c. When do you plan to return to school?

_____

6. I'm going to read some statements to you. They are reasons people give for attending Del Mar. Please answer yes or no about each reason, as it applied to you <u>when you enrolled last semester.</u>

yes	no	
___	___	Get job skills so I can get a job.
___	___	Get more job skills so I can get a raise or promotion.
___	___	Get a license or other credential needed for my work.
___	___	Take courses to transfer to another school.
___	___	Take remedial courses so I can go to another school.
___	___	Be with interesting people.
___	___	Have something to do.
___	___	Learn something new just for fun.
___	___	Learn about a subject I will use in my leisure time.
___	___	Learn to speak or write English.
___	___	For my personal improvement.

7. There are many ways that people describe their feelings about Del Mar. I'll read some of these. For each one, please tell me whether you felt positive or negative--or undecided.

P	N	U	
___	___	___	My grades.
___	___	___	How much I learned.
___	___	___	What I learned that helped on my job or elsewhere.
___	___	___	My enjoyment of the class.
___	___	___	Things that happened at school but not in class.
___	___	___	How well I got to know the teachers.

8. People have many reasons for not returning to college. I will read some of the reasons. Please answer yes or no about whether any of these are your reasons for not returning.

no yes

___ ___ I had accomplished my learning goals.

___ ___ Lack of money.

\---What kinds of problems did you have?

_____

_____

Let me tell you some things other people have said about the kind of money problems they had. You can tell me if any of these are your problems.

___ child care
___ care of someone other than a child
___ tuition
___ transportation costs
___ rent
___ books or school supplies or tools
___ medical expenses

That's all about money. Now let me go on to the next item. Yes or no:

no yes

___ ___ Lack of time.

\---What gave you problems? _____

_____

Let me tell you some things other people say about lack of time. You can tell me if any of these are your problems.

___ home responsibilities.
___ too much homework
___ changed work hours
___ didn't use my time well

That's all about time. Now let me go on to the next item to see if it was one of your reasons for not returning to Del Mar. Yes or no:

no yes

___ ___ Other events or circumstances in my life.

\---What were they? _____

_____

That's all about your circumstances. Now let me ask you a couple of things about Del Mar to see if they had any effect on your not coming back to school this spring. Yes or no:

no	yes	
___	___	I was unhappy with what I got in the classes.
___	___	I was unhappy with something else about the school.

\---What was it? _____

_____

9. Let me go back and read the options you answered yes. Tell me which was the one most important reason you did not come back to Del Mar.
[Reread only the main items from Question 8 that the person answered yes. Circle the yes checkmark for the one the person says was most important. If the person identifies two as equally important, circle two; but try to get the person to settle on one.]

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell Del Mar?

Thank you so much for your help. Your answers will help Del Mar College in planning how to serve its students better.